FOUNDATIONS OF SACRED STUDY.

C. J. ELLICOTT, D.D.,
BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER
AND BRISTOL.

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SACRED STUDY.

Five Addresses

BY

C. J. ELLICOTT, D.D.,

BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL,
AUTHOR OF "CHRISTUS COMPROBATOR," ETC.

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PREFATORY NOTICE.

THE Five Addresses which follow were portions of a Charge very recently delivered at the visitation of the Archdeaconry of Bristol.

The general subject to which they refer, and the cause which they are designed to further, will be found stated in the opening Address.

Since that Address was written I have heard, with great thankfulness, that the Theological Lectures delivered at Oxford in the Long Vacation under the general guidance of the Theological Faculty, attracted many; and that a similar Session will be held next year at the sister University.

C. J. GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL.

GLOUCESTER,
November, 1893.

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FOUNDATIONS OF SACRED STUDY.

ADDRESS I.

Sacred Study—Introductory.

Interest in Sacred Study.

It cannot be doubted that a very widespread interest may be recognized at the present time in all departments of what may be generally spoken of as sacred study. We may observe this, not only in the greatly increased number of books, bearing directly or indirectly on theology, that now issue annually from the press, but in the vast number of articles on scriptural, doctrinal, and ethical subjects that appear in the largely increased periodical literature of the day. Both here and in America guilds of sacred study have been established, prescribed subjects systematically studied, and even examinations prepared for, and passed, from which no further direct advantage could be obtained than that useful knowledge of deficiencies which a well-conducted examination never fails to supply.

In our own Province the need of more sys-

tematized sacred study, and more particularly of higher religious education, has been felt for some time, and has found expression in various organizations which have gradually taken shape during the past ten years. The first movement, if I remember right, was made in the Diocese of Oxford, about the year 1882, by the establishment of lectures on the Bible and Prayer Book, more particularly for the benefit of Sunday-School teachers, and by examinations which were to be conducted under the general supervision of the Bishop. This local and limited movement soon met with general acceptance, and underwent those changes which such an acceptance almost necessarily involves. Church History was added. The study of the Bible and Prayer Book assumed a higher character, and an Association emerged which now includes representatives from most of the Dioceses of the Province.

Report of House of Laymen.

This emergence was probably accelerated by a very interesting as well as thoroughly instructive Report of the House of Laymen[1], which was presented in February, 1891, and on which important reso-

[1] This Report, with the Resolutions thereon passed by the House, can be obtained at the Depository of the National Society.

lutions were passed by the House. Most of these turned upon the religious education of the younger members of the upper and middle classes—at home, at school, and at the universities; but in one of them the parents were not forgotten, and "Societies for Church reading and other similar objects" were commended to the parochial clergy as urgently needed for the elder as well as the younger members of the classes referred to.

Whether owing to this, or to the fact that higher religious education among Church people generally, as well as in schools and in colleges, was being felt year by year to be more urgently needed, sacred study was certainly greatly helped forward and stimulated by a meeting in March, 1891, of the representatives of the Diocesan Societies that had come into existence, and by the emergence above alluded to of a central society under the title of the Central Society for Higher Religious Education, under the presidency of the Archbishop of the Province [1]. The objects aimed at were of a twofold nature; on the one hand, to help those of

[1] A Report of this Conference was printed by Parker and Co., Crown Yard, Oxford, and probably may be obtained from the active and energetic Hon. Secretary of the Central Society, Rev. A. Carr, St. Sebastian's Vicarage, Wokingham.

a more mature age in what may be generally called sacred study, and especially in the recognition of it as a service to Almighty God, especially needed in these days of widely-diffused, but often superficial knowledge; on the other hand, to help the younger members of Christ's flock, by raising the standard and tone of religious teaching in upper and middle-class schools, and by stimulating and encouraging parents to lay the foundations of sound religious knowledge in their children before they leave the comparative shelter of home.

Central Society and its action.

With these two great objects in view the Society was definitely constituted and organized in the early part of last year. An Executive Council was formed, and also a General Committee, consisting of a maximum of five representatives from each Diocesan Society or Association. The first Report of the Society was issued in the October of last year[1], in which lists will be found of the Diocesan Societies in connexion with the Central Society, of their lectures, publications, and of the books they recommend—this last list however being, as might easily be supposed, very incomplete and

[1] Copies of this Report can be obtained at Messrs. James Parker and Co., 27 Broad Street, Oxford.

provisional. A thoroughly good commencement has thus been made in our Province of a most vital and most necessary work—the drawing together into union and coherence of societies and organizations that, for several years past, have been helping forward higher religious education, and encouraging in different ways systematic study of Scripture and of the history of the Christian Church.

The Central Society has taken action exactly in that direction in which it is most likely to do permanent good. It has invited attention to the teaching of religion in our higher-class schools. Here diocesan influence cannot do much. A stronger form of appeal is needed than can possibly issue from the local organization. It was thus very satisfactory that a Conference was arranged by the Central Society with representatives of the upper schools of the country. Both sexes were most properly included; the Report to which I have just alluded showing very plainly that, in girls belonging to the upper classes, deficiency in elementary knowledge is even more patent and pronounced than in boys. When we read, for example, that in a recent examination for admissions to schools, out of 124 girls over twelve years of age, all belonging to the upper classes, only twenty-five

per cent. were able to specify the names of the three Creeds; only eighteen per cent. knew the names of the four greater Prophets, and only eight per cent. the names of the Apostles[1]—when we read this, we seem forced to the conviction, if we are to judge from this sample, that in the case of girls the standard of religious education requires raising even more urgently than in the case of boys; and our conclusion will probably be that of the replies to the Committee of the Lay House, viz. that this low standard is due to "the want of home teaching and religion."

Teaching in Public Schools.

This Conference has certainly produced some good effects[2]. The subject of definite religious instruction was, as we know, somewhat fully discussed at the meeting of Headmasters at the close of last year; and though it cannot be said that any definite results were arrived at, or any great degree of unanimity displayed in the discussion,—yet this is certain, that now that the serious question has been raised, improvement in some form or other will certainly take place.

[1] See *First Report of Central Society for Higher Religious Education*, pp. 11, 12.

[2] The Conference was held in Sion College in June 1892. A Report of the proceedings has been published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1892.

Parents have now had their attention called to the faith of their children; and, it is to be hoped, will not only be reminded of their own serious shortcomings in their home teachings, but will become induced to choose for their children those schools in which definite religious teaching has obtained a fully-recognized and accredited place.

If this were to be the only result of the Report and resolutions of the House of Laymen, and of the formation of the Central Society of Higher Religious Education, we might feel thankful. If no more were likely to be effected than the awakening of the attention of the parents of these children of the upper and middle classes, and of the Headmasters of the great schools where so many of them are educated, we might feel persuaded that, in a Christian country like our own, public opinion would bring about the solution of a problem which is said by many persons of experience to involve some practical difficulties. It may be admitted that the teaching of fundamental doctrine in the general curriculum of a large public school, when perhaps no foundations whatever may have been laid at home, is by no means so easy as it may appear to be on a first consideration of the subject. The very times in which we are

living, the great freedom of thought and expression, especially in reference to the authority of Holy Scripture, that is now everywhere to be recognized, the influence that it must exercise on our younger generation of teachers, all tend to make the teaching of definite doctrine in all the classes of a large public school, upon anything like systematic principles, a matter of considerable difficulty. Still, where there is really a will, the way will indisputably be found. And the best proof of the assertion is, that to a certain extent the way has been found. It was certainly found in the school of King Edward the Sixth at Birmingham, when it was presided over by the eminent Headmaster who was afterwards Bishop of Manchester. I have myself heard from the lips of distinguished men, holding now high places in the Church, of the durable effect of the religious teaching upon themselves, and, so far as they could judge, upon all, in a greater or less degree, who came under its influence. And yet all the time expended was but three hours a week. An hour on Saturday, an hour on Sunday, and an hour on Monday, were found sufficient to lay foundations of religious knowledge, and to evoke an interest in the elements of theology, which living witnesses do not hesitate to

ascribe to this effective and attractive teaching in their boyhood at a Christian school.

I have heard too that at the present time the religious teaching at the greatest of the great schools of our country, conducted, I believe, on the system of a few questions given out on each Saturday for answers on the Monday, reflects itself so distinctly in the elementary examinations at the University that the school from which the student has come is very readily recognized.

The course of religious teaching at another large public school was set forth very fully in a communication made to the Conference on religious teaching in Higher Schools referred to above. From this document it appeared plainly that not only the teaching of Holy Scripture and of the Prayer Book was assuming a systematic form, but that efforts were made to solve the most difficult problem of all—how best to teach doctrine prior to, and subsequently to, Confirmation [1]. The question of Christian Evidences had also come under consideration; and a series of lectures had been given on the subject to the Sixth Form, which, as a subsequent examination seemed to show, had been listened to with interest and with attention. The only subject for

[1] See *Report of Conference*, p. 18 sqq.

which room could not be found was Church History, the amount of history, English, Roman, and Greek, necessarily required in the general school course leaving no time available for it. Room, however, it may be said in passing, *must* be found for it in every higher Christian school; nothing serving more to interest and stimulate the soul, especially of the boy, than sympathetically-taught Church History, more particularly when it is imparted *through biographies*; and of these there is, at the present time, a fairly available supply [1].

But enough has now been said to show that there is no need for losing heart as to religious teaching in our higher schools. It is plain that an increasing interest is felt in the subject, and that there is a clear disposition on the part of those who preside over these schools no longer to trust to the tone of the school as the most hopeful agency in sustaining the religious element—in a word, to teach Christian principles through ethics,—but to lay religious foundations by a teaching as systematic (though necessarily more sympathetically imparted) as that adopted in the other branches of higher education.

[1] The excellent series published by the Christian Knowledge Society, and entitled, *The Fathers for English Readers*, may here especially be mentioned.

Perhaps it may be here said that the discussion on the subject in the Conference of Headmasters above alluded to was not very encouraging. This is true. But two things must be borne in mind. In the first place, the reports of the Conference that appeared in the public papers were necessarily condensed, and probably conveyed very imperfectly to the reader the actual tone of the discussion. And it is on the tone and pervading spirit of a meeting that, in the sequel, far more depends than on the mere resolutions that may be formulated. In the second place, any coldness or reserve that may have appeared in the speeches of those who took the leading parts in the discussion may have been due to the fact that the teaching of definite doctrine, rather than the broader subject of religious teaching generally, seems to have occupied the foreground. This made it almost necessary for those who were conscious of having on their lists the children of parents of very diversified shades of religious thought, to be cautious in their advocacy of a teaching of doctrine at which, in this so-called liberal age of ours, many parents might take alarm. Nay, more, it may have been felt that such teaching could not very safely be entrusted to assistant

Conference of Headmasters.

masters, who, however cultivated they might be, might be very unsatisfactory exponents of definite doctrine.

These considerations may lead us to regard the general results of this portion of the Conference with a little less disappointment than, it may be admitted, has been felt and expressed by many in regard to more systematic religious teaching in the higher schools of this country.

Deficiency on Home Teaching.

One serious truth has certainly been brought home to us by these discussions on the furtherance of religious education in our schools; and it is this—that the *home* teaching of religion at the present time is perilously deficient. It was said by one of the more earnest of the speakers at the Conference at Sion College—and, I fear, said most truly—"that this is the crying danger of the time, that children are not taught in their homes the rudiments of religion[1]." If they are taught, it is, at any rate for the most part, not by those whose teaching, if earnestly given, would be likely to produce the most durable

[1] See *Report of the Conference*, p. 22. The speaker was Rev. E. C. Wickham, the writer of a valuable paper on *Home Training and Teaching in Religion*, read at a Conference of Clergy and Laity of the Deanery of Sonning, 3 Oct. 1890, and published by Parker and Co., Oxford.

effects. Mothers, in what may be called the upper classes, may still, we may hope, teach their children their first prayers, but fathers for the most part are silent. There may, however, be reasons for this, of which some account may be taken.

Fathers may be in many cases affected by the doubts and difficulties of the strange days in which we are living, and honestly feel themselves unable to teach a child the first principles of vital religion. In other cases they may feel hindered and even disqualified by their own ignorance, and their inability to deal with the questions which they might feel certain would be put to them in any attempt to teach, even in the barest outline, the fundamental truths of the Gospel. So the parent's duty is given over to tutors and governesses; and all the quickening and attractive ministries of the home teaching of religion have their place taken by the almost necessarily formal and unappealing lessons of the nursery and the schoolroom.

That there is this decline in the home teaching of religion in the upper and middle classes there now seems no reason whatever to doubt; and that the want of this home teaching is seriously affecting the standard of religious education in the case of the classes referred to seems also to

be distinctly demonstrable. The evidence in this particular of the headmasters of our large preparatory schools is of very great importance, as in nearly all cases the children come to them directly from home. One of these witnesses tells us that, in the boys that come to him, "there is the most lamentable ignorance of the most common facts and teaching of the Bible," that this state of things during the twelve years to which the speaker's experience had extended "has been getting worse and worse," and that, in the case of boys of nine and ten years of age, it is commonly found necessary to begin their religious instruction from the very beginning [1]. And the case is, I fear, but little, if at all, better with young girls of the middle and upper classes. This has been touched upon already; but it may be well to add that when a competent witness, who has but little less than a thousand girls of different ages under her supervision, can speak of the ignorance of the most elementary facts of Bible history, in the case of middle and upper-class girls, as most surprising [2], we can no longer doubt that, to use the words of an earnest speaker on the subject, it is urgently necessary to "let the clergy of the Church of England know that this is the crying danger of the time, that

[1] *Report of the Conference*, p. 29. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

children are not taught in their homes the rudiments of religion[1]."

And such too is the voice of the representative laymen of this our Province of Canterbury. In the admirable Report of the House of Laymen to which I have already referred, we learn that resolutions were passed by the House two years ago, in which the attention of the parochial clergy was called to this vital matter, and to the urgent need of increased care being bestowed on the upper and middle classes in reference "to the sacred duty of instructing their children in religious knowledge[2]." We are all called upon to bear our part, not only by private exhortations, but also by helping to teach those we exhort, whether it be by the indirect instruction of the public catechizing of children, by expository addresses, by the formation of classes of young men and women for the teaching of Church history and doctrine, or by the establishment of societies among parents for Church reading, and for the furtherance of sacred study.

Appeal to the Clergy.

The ultimate appeal then comes, as it ought to come, to us the clergy. If this prevailing ignorance of the elementary facts and first prin-

[1] *Report of the Conference*, p. 22.

[2] *Report of the Committee of the House of Laymen*, p. 3.

ciples of religion in the children of the middle and upper classes is really to be traced back to the parents, and to their inability to give, as well as to their neglect in giving, that early instruction on which all experienced teachers to whom these children are afterwards committed solemnly assure us everything is found really to depend—if this be so, who can feel surprised that it is to our spiritual pastors and masters that the appeal in this necessity must ultimately be made?

But this appeal necessarily calls out among us many heart-searchings, and awakens many serious thoughts. And first of all this grave question suggests itself: Have we, the clergy, been guilty of neglect in reference to the children and parents of the upper and middle classes of this country? Our answer to this question cannot, I fear, be such as we ourselves would desire it to be. We have not absolutely neglected these children, but we have probably not made all those provisions for them prior to Confirmation which we have made for the children of a lower class. We have assumed that as the children of educated Christian parents they would be taught the first principles of religion almost, so to speak, instinctively; and we have probably, in the vast majority of cases, so rested on the assumption that we have never

felt it necessary, either privately or in our public teaching, to press upon these middle and upper-class parents the vital necessity of the home teaching of religion, and the really terrible responsibility of leaving the tender and receptive years of childhood to drift onward without spiritual education. We have looked forward to the time of preparation for Confirmation; but can we honestly say that we have been satisfied with what this time of preparation has disclosed to us? Has not the conviction over and over again been forced upon us, in many and many a case, that no solid foundations had been laid, no true relation to Christ, however imperfectly, felt and realized; no consciousness of the presence and influence of a loving Comforter? The home voices have been silent on these things. We perceive this; and we do our best, but it is often with a sad anxiety of soul as to whether the early loss will ever be fully and completely repaired.

Questions suggested by the Appeal.

But to leave these grave thoughts as to what may have been our shortcomings in the past, and to turn to what we are now called upon to do in the present and the future, let us at once ask the two broad questions: Are the parochial clergy to whom the appeal is made willing to

undertake what the voice of our representative laity calls upon them to do? And, if so, are they, speaking generally, able and fully qualified to do it?

Willingness to respond to the Appeal.

It is ever difficult even to attempt to answer such broad questions, applying as they do to a large body of men of confessedly very varied degrees of spiritual zeal and spiritual cultivation. Still the attempt must be made, as it is the very object of this Charge to offer some guidance in regard of the appeal that is made to us and our ability satisfactorily to answer it. Now that ability must depend largely on a ready will to undertake what must be admitted to be an inc easingly difficult work. It is ever difficult "to teach and to premonish," as, remember, we are bidden to do, in a matter such as this which is now before us, viz. the spiritual nurture of children when parents do not supply it: it is difficult at any time, but still more difficult is it at a time like the present, when there is a growing indifference in regard of definite doctrine in these very classes which we are called upon to influence. Can we count upon the ready will? What are we to say? There is indisputably greatly diffused earnestness in our whole Church of England, and especially, as it ought to be, in

our clergy: services are multiplied, spiritual organizations are increased, and pastoral work generally largely developed. Yet it is not clear to me that it has been as much developed in some departments of the teaching of the young as it might seem reasonable to expect. Take that simplest and most elementary of all pastoral duties—the personal religious teaching of children in the parish National School. In such a matter it is perhaps difficult to obtain anything like accurate information. But, as far as it has been obtained, it does not tend to prove that readiness to teach in the week-day school is at all a noticeable characteristic of pastoral work at the present time. So far as I can infer from the statistics which come before me, I should be disposed to say that of late years the number of those who regularly visit their schools, and take some part in the religious teaching, is declining rather than increasing. And yet there is now more need for this teaching than ever, and for keeping up a standard which the pressure of the secular work of the school is always tending to lower and depreciate.

Take another illustration. Of those who have an especial claim on our clergy for religious instruction, and for the imparting of definite principles of Church teaching, can any

class of our younger brethren have a stronger claim than our pupil teachers? And yet, as year follows year, we learn from the Inspector in Religious Knowledge of our Training Colleges that among the students the level of religious knowledge is still patently falling; and that in tracing out the apparent causes of this falling level it is found that the number of students who, as pupil teachers received instruction from the clergy, is not only small, but declining. Of those who received instruction from the clergy in 1890 the proportion was 32 per cent.; in 1891, 29 per cent.; in 1892, 25 per cent.[1]. In our own diocese I fear that the proportion may not be very different; but here I cannot speak precisely, as our inspectors only mention in general terms that in very many cases the instruction is not from the clergy but from the head teacher of the school. It is added, however, that this is not found to be the case in the parishes where the work of the clergy is greatest; but that, where we might have felt it less likely to have expected it, at least an hour a week has been given to this most necessary duty[2].

We may fear, then, that the same tendency to delegate to others the duty of teaching religion,

[1] *Report of National Society* for 1893, p. 76.

[2] *Report of the Diocesan Inspectors of the Diocese of Gloucester and Bristol* p. 6.

which we noticed in regard of many of the parents in the middle and upper classes, is also found to some extent among ourselves, and that the ready will cannot be counted upon to the extent we might have hoped for. A large amount of apathy will have to be overcome before the resolutions of the House of Laymen can adequately be carried out.

Ability to respond to the Appeal.

If, however, we may have some reason for questioning the readiness of will, still more reason shall we be found to have for questioning the full power to do what is required. What we are urged to do is, in fact, to interest in the teaching of the elementary principles of Christianity classes that are fast becoming less and less qualified to undertake it. The busy lives men live; the accumulating doubts of which so many in the better-educated classes are now painfully aware; the increasing tendency to fall back upon that strange form of religion which styles itself the religion of most sensible men—all these characteristics of our own times make it inconceivably difficult so to awaken interest in vital religion as to bring back again that home teaching which all who are connected with the young feel, now more than ever, to be a pressing and urgent necessity.

This is what we, the clergy, are called upon to undertake, and to undertake too at a time when—if the foregoing remarks are correct—teaching power is declining, and the aptitude for strongly influencing others is apparently becoming debilitated.

Best mode of preparation.

If there thus be to some extent want of the ready will, and also, by the nature of the case, of the full power to do what is required, the very first question that presents itself is, How can the will be quickened? how can such interest in a great duty be called out as will go far to facilitate the doing of that duty? There can be but one answer. We must pray to Almighty God to enable us all to realize the plain fact that, at a critical time in the progress and development of human thought—at a time when doubts and difficulties on the one hand, and (by the grace and mercy of God) evidences and reassurances on the other hand, are accumulating in equal amount—that, at a period such as this, we are called upon to help very many of those committed to us, and to prepare them for the spiritual trials and conflicts of the unknown yet apparently ominous future. If we are permitted to realize this, and distinctly to feel that this is the appeal that is now made to us, we may

feel quite sure that the will to bear our part will be vouchsafed to us, and that there will remain only the consideration how best to qualify ourselves for the great work to which we are called. That work, to speak broadly and generally, is to raise the whole standard of religious education, and especially in those classes which are now judged more particularly to need it. The question then now before us is, How are we to qualify ourselves? What is the best mode of preparing ourselves for this work?

Such is our subject in its most general form, and it is to this subject that I shall now devote all the remainder of this Charge.

Thus far we have seen that there is much to encourage and to stimulate. The subject of sacred study and its development is, so to say, in the air. We are not now entering upon a merely academical subject, but upon a subject that is occupying the foreground of many minds, and, as we have seen, is intimately connected with the whole religious future of the uprising generation. And all this, we have seen, is so fully felt and realized, that practical appeals are made to us to bring the results of sacred study into a position of closer relation to modern thought and cultivation than as yet they have been found to occupy.

Need of doctrinal teaching.

And the time is favourable for giving attention to such appeals. As we have seen already, real interest is now awakened in sacred study, and especially in Church History and the more intelligent reading and marking of God's Holy Word. In doctrine, as yet, but moderate interest has been shown. It is admitted to be of vital necessity, especially in these times, but whether from the want of attractive manuals, or from an imperfect realization of its true relation to life, distinct doctrinal teaching has met with but little acceptance in those strata of modern society of which we are now more particularly thinking and speaking. It finds but little place in sermons to what may be called cultivated congregations; and yet, as has been shown in the case of a great preacher who has not long since been called from us, the sermons that have appealed most powerfully to vast congregations of all classes have been sermons that were essentially doctrinal in their leading characteristics, and that found all true answers to the anxious questions of the day in the ground-principles of the Catholic Faith. No teaching could illustrate more clearly than that of Canon Liddon that the characteristic of a preaching which not only attracts but perma-

nently influences, is neither its eloquence nor its imagination, but its grasp of fundamental truth, and its power of bringing that truth home to the soul of the hearer.

Much more attention, then, must be given to the teaching of doctrine, if our clergy are to be, as they ought to be, leaders in religious thought at a time like the present, when guidance, especially in the case of the educated classes, is more urgently needed than ever. We are apt to think that fairly-educated people must know something about the principles of the Church to which they belong, and that all that is needed is earnest exhortation to take upon them, in regard of their children, the duty they are delegating to others. Far, far more is needed. Of this I am confident, that if we had any means of actually ascertaining the real amount of the knowledge—or, perhaps it ought rather to be said, of the ignorance—of the first principles of Catholic truth which exists among those to whose children we are now called upon to give the bread their parents never give them, we should see clearly enough that it is not so much to worldliness and apathy as to sheer incapacity, and to a consciousness of it, that the present state of things is to be attributed.

The present position.

The sum and substance then of all that has been hitherto said is this: first, that by the blessing and mercy of God there is now a widespread feeling that far more attention must be given to the systematic teaching of religion, alike to the children and to the parents of those classes which we have hitherto supposed, by their very position, not to stand in need of it. Secondly, that consequently the appeal is made, and rightly made, to us, the ministers and stewards of God's mysteries, to undertake the great duty of supplying the recognized need, and to provide for the middle and upper classes that systematic teaching of the Faith which, in its simpler form has been given, and for the most part efficiently given, to the classes that stand below them in the social scale.

If this is the form and nature of the appeal it is obvious that our first duty will be to qualify ourselves for the responsible work. That we are already qualified by our very profession is what few probably would be disposed to maintain. In all forms of practical Church work indisputably great progress has been made, but in regard of sacred study the very movements to which I have alluded in an earlier part of this address are of themselves sufficient to

remind us that there is a very general feeling that, to speak very plainly, our own education needs development.

Except it be in the interpretation of Holy Scripture, and, to some extent, in the study of the Prayer Book, but little advance has been made during the last fifty years in what may be called the ordinary curriculum of professional training. Our younger men use in some departments of theology—particularly in the department of doctrine—the selfsame books that their fathers before them used when preparing for entrance examinations into the ministry. And yet during the last half of this fifty years very great changes have taken place in evidential and doctrinal study, and latterly in the estimate of the authority and inspiration of Holy Scripture. Christian Ethics, a subject almost unknown to the ordinary students of a generation ago, is now claiming a place by the side of dogmatics, and is vindicating its right to be considered a part of any reasonably inclusive theological course. Archaeology is also assuming a wholly new aspect. The mere antiquarian element is fast giving place, in the realm of sacred study, to the evidential; and to such an extent, that no one who would desire to bring real conviction to the souls of others in refer-

ence to early Biblical history can ever, without plain dereliction of duty, neglect to study the marvellous confirmation of the truth of the early pages of God's Holy Word that year by year are brought home to us by the providential revelations of archaeology. When such mysterious figures as Melchisedek can be brought into the foreground of actual and veritable history[1], and when events so apparently unlikely ever to receive verifying illustration as the building of the Tower of Babel and the subsequent breaking up of the unity of language[2], can

[1] An interesting paper on this subject by Professor Sayce will be found in the *Expository Times* for October 1892, p. 14 sqq. The letter to which Professor Sayce refers will be found in the new series of *Records of the Past*, vol. v. p. 66 sqq. The same letter has been translated by Major Conder in his recent work, *The Tell Amarna Tablets* (p. 159). There are differences of rendering in the two versions, but not more than might be expected in a language so recently deciphered, and, as yet, so provisionally translated as the ancient Babylonian.

[2] See an interesting paper by Mr. T. Pinches of the British Museum, read at the Church Congress of 1891, in which the singular prevalence of the Babylonian script over the whole of the then civilized world is alluded to in connexion with Gen. xi. 1. It is stated by other authorities that there are clear proofs that the "speech of Babel" was the medium of communication throughout Western Asia at a very early period, and probably had been so from the very dawn of civilization: see Evett's *New Light on the Bible*, p. 170 (Lond. 1892), and comp. Preface to the 5th volume of the new series of *Records of the Past*, p. xii.

be brought into line with independent records of the past, it becomes really culpable for us to fail ourselves to take note of these things, and to tell them simply and truthfully to others. The effect such evidential illustrations have upon some minds is often profoundly great. It ought not perhaps to be so. A simple childlike faith that requires no such extraneous supports stands on a higher level; still, the very fact that God is now vouchsafing to us these unlooked-for illustrations of the truth of His Word, may be thankfully regarded as a token that we may rightfully make all possible use of them.

Subjects now claiming attention.

Church History is also now claiming greatly increased attention. In most of our dioceses it occupies a leading place in the different schemes of sacred study. Still, but little has been done to make it a popular subject, except perhaps in reference to our own Mother Church of England[1]. What is wanted, however, is some clear and helpful guidance in the general study of the subject. There is a fair amount of available

[1] The success of Lectures on early English Church History, and of popular narratives such as those of Mr. Nye (*Popular Story of the Church of England*, and, more recently, *The Church and her Story*), show plainly how welcome this kind of teaching is found to be at the present time.

material, but the use made of it has, as yet, been very limited, and the best methods of promoting the study of the general subject very imperfectly recognized.

Five wide fields of sacred study are thus spreading out before us; into which, if we are to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God—if we are to help, as we are now called upon to help, the imperfect or uninstructed faith of those committed to us—we must joyfully and hopefully enter. The time is favourable; the opportunity is great. So strongly do I feel this that I have thought it desirable in the present Charge to make some comments on the best mode of studying the two most important of the five subjects to which I have alluded, viz. Holy Scripture and Christian Doctrine, to each of which I have devoted two addresses. The three remaining subjects, viz. Ethics, Biblical History and Archaeology, and Church History, must be reserved for some future opportunity, as they could not be adequately discussed in the comparatively limited time afforded to me by the present Visitation. The more systematic study of Holy Scripture and of Christian Doctrine may however be treated—if not with the fulness which such subjects require—yet, at any rate, in such a manner as to offer some guidance at

a time when guidance and encouragement seem to be very generally needed.

Much good has been done in this diocese by the now annual courses of Lenten Lectures. Great interest has, I rejoice to know, been felt in the subjects and the manner in which they have been set forth. Much sound teaching on Biblical and doctrinal subjects has been given in all parts of the diocese, and a great debt of gratitude is owed by us all to those of our brethren who have now, for some few years, taken part in this blessed, helpful, and most seasonable work. The four addresses that will follow are my contribution, in a necessarily general form, to these diocesan efforts to make the elements of sacred study better known alike to clergy and laity, and to meet to some extent the great spiritual needs to which I have alluded in the earlier portion of this address.

Nature of the Addresses.

In reference to the four addresses that will follow it will be enough to say that, in the two that will be devoted to Holy Scripture and the best mode of studying it, the first will deal principally with what Holy Scripture truly is, and with those presuppositions and that general spirit in which we must approach the study of it. In the second of the two addresses I shall

enter more into details, and mention what, in my judgment, are the best methods of carrying out the study for which preparation will have been made. For the due carrying out of these methods there is no lack of good and available assistance. In the general domain of the interpretation of Holy Scripture much has been done in the past and in the present generation. The historical element has been supplied with conspicuous success; and the varied forms of illustration have been receiving, almost year by year, contributions which have given, in many respects, a partially new aspect and character to Biblical exegesis. Much of this has been embodied in current commentaries, and has been made available in different forms for almost all classes of students.

It is, however, somewhat otherwise with regard to Christian doctrine. There is no lack of standard treatises of a high and instructive character; but they are not always accessible to the student, and not uncommonly require an amount of disciplined thought which, in this hurrying and somewhat superficial age, is rarely forthcoming in the case of the general student. It has thus been my care in the two concluding addresses on this difficult subject to set forth doctrine in as simple and coherent

a form as the nature of the subject would allow. In the first of the two addresses I have dwelt mainly upon what may be regarded as foundation-doctrines—the necessarily preliminary doctrine of Faith (for the Creed begins with an "I believe")—the Doctrine of God, and the Doctrine of Man, and have thus prepared the way for the many and vital doctrines which flow from the consideration of the union and communion into which, through His boundless and adorable mercy, the eternal God has vouchsafed to enter with fallen and sinful man.

Into this latter portion of the great subject, and the doctrines connected with it, I shall enter in the second and concluding address, and shall endeavour to illustrate those principles of doctrinal teaching on which the Church has, for the most part, been agreed, or which experience has proved to be most abiding and salutary. We have here no definite method of teaching to which we can very confidently appeal, no mode of communicating doctrine, unless it be the catechetical, which has a prerogative claim on our attention. Modern thought seems to incline to a deductive method of teaching, by which I mean the selection of one great doctrine, such, for example, as the Incarnation, and the setting forth of all other doctrines as

flowing from it, or necessarily involved in it. Such methods are, however, almost certain to lead to one-sidedness, and, to artificial relations between doctrines which Scripture does not at all substantiate. Christianity is not a philosophy, but a final revelation of vital truths which, as our Creeds seem very distinctly to indicate, are best realized as separate yet coherent elements of the Faith. But on these things we must reserve our comments for the closing address.

Such are the two departments of sacred study into which we propose to enter during this present Visitation. The consideration of these subjects will not, I am glad to feel, find us wholly unprepared. Sacred study has, as I have already implied, certainly made some progress in this diocese during the last few years, and interest has plainly been awakened among the younger clergy in systematic theological reading. Still the progress is slow, and the preference for what may be termed the practical duties of our sacred office is at present plainly preponderant. Young men find it more easy to enter into the details of parochial work than to study. And yet what language can be more definite and more serious, in reference especially to Biblical study, than that which was addressed to them at the

most solemn moment of their lives—just before they were about to kneel down and receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God,—work surely involving faithful study as well as faithful ministrations?

This work, and the solemn duty of undertaking it steadily and systematically, it is the object and purpose of this Charge earnestly to commend to our younger ministers and pastors in this diocese; and not to them only, but to all, whether parents, teachers, or students, who may feel that they need some help and guidance in the two great departments of sacred study which have already been specified. In attempting to offer this help two broad principles will be steadily observed; on the one hand, to be so far popular in the treatment and setting forth of the subjects that will occupy our attention as to interest sober readers, whether professional or general, who may feel drawn to these studies. On the other hand, equal care will be taken to present the subjects in those forms which recent investigation or recent criticism shows to be most trustworthy. Theology, we must be ready to admit, is a progressive science in the best sense of the words[1]. As the ages roll onward, and

[1] A popular tract on this subject by Dr. Angus will be found in the excellent series published by the Religious Tract Society, entitled *Present Day Tracts*: see No. 68.

the lights of the heavenly city seem to increase in visibility and brightness to each earnest pilgrim in his progress towards its walls, many things seem to appear under clearer aspects and more palpably defined forms. The old truths are seen to be ever the same, and yet to have gained by the permitted advance of knowledge in freshness and persuasiveness. A kind of unifying influence seems to be discernible in the treatment of old antagonisms in Christian doctrines; nay, even a more distinct coherence seems to be traceable in the sequences and developments of the spiritual history of the race. And such things we must not fear to recognize. There is plainly growing light around us, and we may be permitted not only to note it but to rejoice in it.

Under the general influence of these two principles—simplicity of treatment, and due recognition of the more healthy movements of modern thought—we now address ourselves to the consideration of the best and most helpful mode of studying that which every hour of deeper meditation teaches us reverently and lovingly to speak of as the Book of Life.

ADDRESS II.

Study of Holy Scripture.

PART I.

We now proceed to the consideration of the systematic study of Holy Scripture, and of the best and most helpful mode of carrying it out.

At first sight it might seem unnecessary, in these days of increased earnestness in spiritual work, and of plainly awakened interest in the study of God's Holy Word, to bring such a subject before the clergy of a large archdeaconry. And yet a very little consideration of the hurrying and hurried age in which we are living, and the clearly-marked tendency to devote time and energy to what may be termed the practical side of our profession rather than to study and contemplation, may well remind us that at no period in the present century has it been more needful to dwell upon such a subject as that which is now before us—the systematic study of the Book of Life.

I shall make, then, no apology for dwelling upon such a subject before such an audience;

for I cannot suppress the belief that if each one of us was plainly asked how much time, each day as it passes, we devote to that "daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures," which was pressed upon us in the most momentous hour of our whole spiritual life, our answers would, in the great majority of cases, be very far from satisfactory. We might, I trust, all be able to show that no day passed without some sort of reading of Holy Scripture, whether in connexion with our devotions, or in the preparation of our sermons; but those of us who could specify the portion of God's Word that was now in reading, and the blessed and fruitful hour that was spent in its orderly and systematic study, would, I fear, be but few, fewer perhaps than we feel inclined to suppose.

Object of the Address.

Now my object in this address is not only to encourage all who may not hitherto have been in the habit of doing so, to study Holy Scripture on some well-considered system, but also to offer such guidance as may make the performance of this most quickening duty more easy and more attractive. For of this I am persuaded, that nothing more awakens in us the true love of God's Holy Word—that love of which our Church speaks in the collect for St. Bartholomew's

day—than the regular and patient searching of the Scriptures, and the devotion, wherever it may be possible, of a fixed time, however limited, for this life-giving duty, each day as it passes. The effect it is ever found to produce on our prayers, and on the devotional reading which, as far as possible, should be associated with them, is simply amazing. A new fountain of life seems opened to us; and a vigour and freshness imparted to soul and spirit, a hallowing influence amid daily cares, a consolatory power in sorrows and troubles, which, apart from experience, we never could have imagined to be due to a procedure so simple as that which I am now advocating—studious reading of Holy Scripture, as far as possible at a settled time, and on a carefully considered and steady system.

This system I will now endeavour to sketch out in this address, and in such a form and with such details as experience has been found to suggest. In a word, we may consider ourselves as endeavouring to answer, with such fulness as our limits may allow, one simple and single question, What would seem to be the best and most profitable method of studying the Word of God?

Our answer will necessarily be an answer of details; but those details must be subordinated

to some clear conceptions of that which is the subject-matter of the question. The subject-matter is the Word of God. What mean we by the term? Well, for the present, without now pausing to justify the propriety of the expression, let us be content to answer simply, that we mean the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

Need of preliminary conceptions.

But it must be obvious that we cannot possibly enter into the details connected with the broad question of the best mode of studying these Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, without first endeavouring to agree upon some preliminary conceptions as to the nature of these Scriptures—their characteristics, their interdependence, and, in a word, all that we consider the terms, used generally, to convey to us and to involve.

We well know that we are now in the very focus of the storm-winds of countless controversies. Into these, however, under present circumstances, we must not even attempt to enter. The subject before us is not the exact nature or characteristics of Holy Scripture, but the best mode of reading it. Some preliminary estimate we must of course make of that which is to be read, and of the relations to each other

in which the component parts may be considered to stand; but this estimate and these preliminary statements we must be content to set forth in the sort of resultant form in which they would probably be accepted by the great majority of those who have entered soberly and impartially into these difficult and debateable questions.

The four preliminary comments, or, after what has been said, the four semi-postulates in reference to Holy Scripture which it seems necessary to make are as follows:—

1. That in our study of the Bible, we are really not dealing with a book but a collection of books, of different characters, and widely different ages; and that no study of the Bible can ever be completely profitable that does not take steady cognizance of this most elementary statement. And yet, elementary as it is, it may safely be asserted that half of the misconceptions and perverse systems of interpretation which have darkened the true light of God's Holy Word may be traced up to a neglect, or want of due recognition, of the multiform character of Holy Scripture, and of the "divers portions" and "divers manners[1]" in which God

The Bible a collection of books.

[1] Heb. i. 1 (Revised Version).

has vouchsafed to speak through His appointed media to the children of men. Nay, we may say further, that the bulk of Christian readers, even up to the present time, read the Bible under the assumption that the same spiritual authority is to be ascribed to its utterances wherever those utterances may be found. Even those who may be theoretically aware of the untenable nature of such an assumption are unable practically to shake it off in their method, or rather want of method, of reading different portions of Scripture, especially in the case of the Old Testament. No particular preparation would seem to be required in passing from one book to another beyond what a current Introduction might supply: no consciousness would arise in the mind of the reader that he might be passing into a new domain of spiritual thought, or into a very different method of the presentment of historical truth, and that a far greater preparation for such transitions was needed than it had ever occurred to him to make.

What, however, can be more patent, when we allow the thought to rest on it for a moment, than this—that we have in the Old Testament a literature extending over at least 1100 years, and including History, Poetry, Ethics, and Prophecy, each department requiring its own

particular form of preparatory study; and that some recognition of this must be absolutely necessary. Nor can it be less clear, in reference to the New Testament, that though its contents do not extend over more than two generations, and its subject-divisions are obvious and familiar, the forms in which Christian doctrine is presented by the inspired writers have many differing features, and can never be properly appreciated without an independent study of the system consciously or unconsciously adopted by the individual writer. But such things are rarely noted by the general reader: to him a doctrinal statement, if found in one rather than another of the holy writers, carries with it no connotation, and suggests no particular inference. He has been accustomed to view the New Testament as one homogeneous volume, and he loses in consequence much of its deeper and more inferential significance.

If I might offer to the student in a summary form my advice in reference to the matter we are now considering, it would certainly be as follows: cultivate the habit of regarding the Old Testament and the New Testament as each the aggregate of the productions of independent writers, and in passing from the study of one writer to the study of another make distinct

preparation accordingly. The observance of this rule, simple and obvious as it may appear to be, is very largely neglected by the general reader.

2. The second preliminary comment or semi-postulate is this: that, notwithstanding this diversity of composition, there is in the Sacred Scriptures such a unifying element that an organic connexion may distinctly be traced between the two Testaments—the Old Testament (to use the perspicuous statement of Hooker) "teaching salvation through Christ that should come; the New, teaching that Christ the Saviour is come[1]."

Organic connexion between the Testaments.

Without a clear recognition of the principle involved in this statement, viz. that there is an organic connexion between the two Testaments, the study of Holy Scripture will always be found to be radically unsatisfactory. The tendency to regard the Old Testament as only having an historical interest for Christians—one of the baneful tendencies of our own times—will sensibly increase, and carry with it many perilous consequences, especially in reference to the attestation which the Old Testament has received from Christ and His Apostles. In the earlier days of the history of the Church there

[1] *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity.* Book I. 14. 4 (ed. Keble).

may have been, as the writings of the Apostolic Fathers seem to some extent to indicate, a tendency to overvalue the Old Testament, and to lose sight of its essentially preparatory and pedagogic character. In the present age the tendency is entirely in the other direction, and there seems reason for thinking that, under the influence of the so-called "higher criticism," this tendency will continue to develop, until at last the Old Testament will be simply regarded as the religious book of the Jews, and as standing in a relation of more or less spiritual antithesis to that which will increasingly be regarded as the sole religious book of Christianity.

All these dangers, and they are very real dangers, will readily be avoided if we consistently maintain the idea of an *organic* connexion between the two Testaments; and, if asked to define what we mean by such a connexion, to avail ourselves of the illustrations which the organic world will often very clearly supply. It has been well observed by a careful writer[1] on the subject we are now considering, that as in

[1] Voigt, *Fundamentaldogmatik*, p. 500 sq., Gotha 1874. This clearly written and instructive volume has not, so far as I am aware, appeared in English. Though nearly twenty years have elapsed since its publication, it is not in any respect out of date, and if translated would probably find many readers.

every developing organism we may observe some elements in the lower stages which are found unchanged in the higher stages; some which only exist in germ in the lower, but come to maturity in the higher; and some which, existing in the lower, disappear altogether in the higher—so shall we find it with the principal constituent elements of the Old and New Testaments. Many truths—such, for example, as the existence of One, Personal, Holy, All-wise, All-powerful, and All-merciful God; the creation by Him, preservation, and government, of the world; the primal innocence of man, his fall, and its consequences—are not only common to both Testaments, but even form the presuppositions on which the New Testament rests as the bases of its doctrinal development. Other truths, such as those of the Holy Trinity, the Person of Christ, the Atonement, the future of the world, and the greater part of the truths connected with the Last Things—all more or less clearly revealed in the New Testament—are only just traceable in the Old Testament in germ-like forms or typical fore-shadowings; while, in the third place, sharply-defined characteristics which meet us at every turn in the Old Testament, such as the ceremonial requirements, the sacrificial system, the choice of a

peculiar people, and the indefeasible claims of the Law, disappear either wholly or essentially in the dispensation by which God hath spoken to us in His Son.

This recognition of the organic connexion of the two Testaments, and consequently of the distinction between them which such a form of connexion by its very nature involves, is a presupposition which must always hold a prominent place in the principles of the faithful reader of God's Holy Word.

Scripture the medium of Revelation.

3. Not of less importance is a third presupposition or semi-postulate — that Holy Scripture is the written medium of God's revelation to man. Scripture is not itself the revelation, though often popularly so entitled, but is that by which God vouchsafes to impart the disclosure of Himself and of His relations to mankind. The statement applies to both Testaments, though, after what has been said, in very different measure and degree. We may say generally in reference to Holy Scripture that, viewed as a whole, it is the record of the development of salvation, the historical verification of the truths of the primal prophecy[1]. But, by the very nature of the case, when we

[1] Genesis iii. 15.

regard each Testament separately, the revelation which the written word presents to us is different in its nature and character. In the Old Testament it is by the medium of history, or rather, as it has been well said, by the medium of a history within a history[1], a sacred history in which God is ever revealing Himself not only as the Creator and moral Governor of the world, but as the loving Father of mankind, and this "by divers portions and in divers manners[2]." In the New Testament the revelation is equally by means of history, but the history is the history of the personal Saviour of the world, and of all that flows from the spoken words and soul-saving deeds of that most holy life. It is here that God is speaking to us "in His Son[3]"—in His words, and by His acts,—and in the recorded history of His Apostolic Church.

Revelation and history are thus never to be separated, either in reference to the Old or to the New Covenant. And yet modern thought is ever seeking directly or indirectly to weaken the connexion; and especially in reference to the Old Testament. From the days of Schleier-

Revelation and History not to be separated.

[1] Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, § 12, p. 13 (Transl.).

[2] Hebrews i. 1 (Rev. Version): see the note in *Salutary Doctrine*, p. 31 (S. P. C. K.).

[3] Hebrews i. 2.

macher down to the present the tendency is to see in the Old Testament nothing more than the record of the historical development of a national religion emerging from myths and traditions, and passing by slow stages into orderly history — national history, and nothing more; no divine purpose, no providential design ordering all its sequences, no holy Form mysteriously assuming more and more definite outline at each momentous epoch of the past, in a word—no true, no essential idea of history[1] permeating these annals of a nation that, at any rate, stands unique in the records of mankind.

Against all such estimates of Scripture the conscientious student must ever be on his guard; and the more so, as the tendency to place in the background the recognition of the written Word as the medium and vehicle of Revelation is showing itself in reference to the New Testament as well as to the Old, and even

[1] The essential idea of History is briefly, but in a very striking manner, set forth by Bishop Martensen in the following words :—"The essential idea of History is to give expression to the living and reciprocal relation between the divine will and the human, between eternity and time, between the ideal and the actual: the aim of history is to bring the undecided to a decision." *Christian Dogmatics*, § 89, p. 171 (Transl.).

in reference to the words of our Lord Himself. Here it might be thought there could be no doubt that, whatever else might be said, we might rely upon the words as being the very words which passed the divine lips of our Master and the direct revelation of His teaching. And yet even here modern criticism has been bold enough to suggest that the recorded words are probably not to be depended on as a direct revelation of what Christ really said, but His words after they had passed through the modifying memory, and had become tinged with the individuality, of the writer who records them[1]. It is thus vitally important that the earnest student should hold fast to the truth and principle that in Scripture we have revelation; and it may be further said that without this conviction there never can be that love of God's Word which is the highest and most quickening gift that can be vouchsafed to the faithful reader—that gift by which alone the living power of the Word can ever be truly felt and realized.

The truest test of the reality of our love of God is the feeling of the soul towards the Word which reveals Him.

[1] See *Salutary Doctrine*, pp. 50, 59.

4. The fourth and last presupposition with which it is essential that we approach the study of Holy Scripture is one that flows from the presupposition which we have just considered; and it is this—that the holy writers who reveal to us the nature of God and His saving love of mankind were specially qualified to do so, or, in other words, were inspired. Revelation implies and involves inspiration.

The holy writers inspired.

But what mean we by inspiration? To answer fully this question is far beyond the limits of this address. Still, some answer must be given, as the subject on which we are engaged necessarily requires that the sense in which the word is used should be made plain to the reader. And the answer we give is this: Inspiration is, so to speak, the direct equipment by the inflowing of the Holy Spirit for adequately expressing in human language the truths revealed by Almighty God to the spirit of the recipient. It is thus neither, on the one hand, a simple enhancement of what may be termed general Christian illumination[1], nor, on the

[1] Comp. Rothe, *Theologische Ethik*, § 527, p. 126 sq (ed. 2), and see Voigt, *Fundamentaldogmatik*, p. 576. A good synoptical account of the various modern theories of Inspiration will be found in this last-mentioned work; § 11, pp. 531–591.

other hand, a resultant consequence of direct dictation by the Holy Spirit, but is the divinely imparted qualification to report rightly what God is pleased to move the speaker or the writer to communicate. It is thus, in reference to the written word, something that adheres, not to the writing but to the writer. We may speak indeed, as an Apostle speaks, of a writing being divinely inspired [1], but in so speaking we must be understood as implying no more than that it was written by one who, as another Apostle expresses it, was under the movement and influence of the Holy Ghost [2]. If the term be thus used many of the difficulties which this intricate subject confessedly involves will be found to disappear.

The operation and sphere of inspiration.

We shall not, however, correctly appreciate all that is involved in the idea of inspiration, unless we append to the general conception, that its selection is personal, some considerations as to the nature and limits of its operation in the person to whom it is vouchsafed.

In the first place, the most superficial study of the writings, especially of the New Testament, plainly disclose to us that this spiritual

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 16. [2] 2 Pet. i. 21.

equipment of which we speak in no degree whatever obliterates the individuality of the recipient, in regard either of mental or general characteristics. Modes of thought and expression remain completely unchanged; peculiarities of diction and even of reasoning are in no way affected; the writer is always himself. This only is secured, that what the writer is moved to reveal is adequately revealed, and is expressed in language that conveys what is designed by the Holy Ghost to be conveyed to the spirit and soul of the reader.

Secondly, it must be borne in mind that the realm in which inspiration operates is the spiritual realm. The subject-matter with which it is concerned is salvation-truth — all that relates, directly or indirectly, to the fuller knowledge of a Heavenly Father, and to the bringing of His saving health to all the children of men. It is thus very varied in its manifestations. Sometimes it is to be felt in the truthfulness of the record of God's merciful dealings with a chosen family and a peculiar people; sometimes it gives wings to the thoughts and utterances of the Psalmist; sometimes it imparts vigour and depth to the teachings of wisdom; sometimes it spreads out new horizons to the prophet, or again, under

another Covenant and with a more continuous influence, brings to the remembrance of the Evangelist the living words of an absent Master, clothes and fills with divine power the appeal of the Apostle, or helps him to give in written form, not only to a present, but to an after world, the matured fruits of spiritual experience, or to present quickening visions of the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdom of Christ, and the limitless perspectives of a Redeemer's reign—all, all, outflowings of that one and the self-same Spirit who divideth to each man severally as He will[1].

Such is Inspiration; its sphere the highest part of our composite nature, and its subject-matter the truths of salvation, or those mysteries, such as the resurrection of the body or the life of the world to come, which the unaided intellect could never, even in imagination, conceive. Such it is, its reality vouched for by the relation of the Apostles to the Saviour of the world, and by the circumstances of the Pentecostal manifestation; and its influence discernible, though under widely different forms, in every page of that which we are thus justified in speaking of as the Word of God.

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 11.

Sometimes it has been doubted whether this last expression can be rightly applied to the whole body of the Canonical Scriptures[1]. That our own Church has felt no hesitation on the subject may very easily be proved by many passages in our formularies in which such terms as "God's most Holy Word" are obviously used with reference to the Bible as a whole. And rightly so used; for every careful investigation of the subject will be found to lead to the same conclusion, viz. this, that we cannot draw safely any distinctions between the inspiration of the New Testament and the inspiration of the Old, unless it be that which the history of salvation of itself suggests to us. For example, we have no satisfactory grounds for supposing that He who spake by the prophets dwelt with them as He dwelt with the Apostles. When He vouchsafed to come, His influence fully equipped the spirit into which He entered for the setting forth of that, whether history or prophecy, utterances of wisdom or songs of praise, which it was God's pleasure should be set forth to His people. But it was

The Word of God.

[1] See Driver, *Sermons on the Old Testament*, Serm. vii. p. 160 (Lond. 1892). On the true meaning of the expression, see the excellent comments of Bishop Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, § 239, p. 403 (Transl.).

not an abiding inspiration. Nay, it could not be, for the Holy Spirit had not been given; the tongue had never yet sat on priest or prophet as He afterwards sat on Apostle or Evangelist. This distinction we must maintain, for the sacred history of the world and of the Church prescribe it and require it. But we draw no further distinctions. We indulge in no theory of degrees of inspiration, or imagine only some enhanced form of the illuminating influence which the Holy Ghost may have ever vouchsafed to exercise in the soul of man. We preserve only the simple, and, so to speak, historical distinction between inspiration under the Old Covenant and inspiration under the New Covenant, regarding all other distinctions as unreal and precarious.

Mental attitude of the reader.

We have now considered the four presuppositions or semi-postulates, in reference to the Bible, which must be fully recognized by the student before he enters upon that regular "reading and weighing" of the contents of the blessed Book on which I purpose to speak more particularly in the next portion of this Charge. But our present preliminary thoughts would not be complete without some reference to the mental attitude which must be assumed

by the reader who would desire to approach the study of Holy Scripture with real profit to the soul. This aspect of the subject is far too much neglected at the present time. It is too readily assumed that the subjective condition of the reader does not strictly belong to the present subject; whereas a moment's consideration must remind us that if the Bible is what we have presupposed it to be, we can never adequately discuss the best method of studying it without some reference to the general feelings of the student when he addresses himself to the responsible work. When he sits down to read the Holy Scriptures what is his general estimate of the Book that lies open before him? Is it possible to conceive that the best mode of reading it, in the ordinary sense of the words, will not be affected by the nature of the heart-interest he feels in the Book; and that, not merely with reference to the spiritual profit he may receive from it, but to the intellectual grasp he may obtain of it? We forget this far too commonly. It is the result of the sort of unexpressed conviction that, after all, whatever be the best way of reading any book that is truly worthy of study must needs be the best way of reading the Bible. But even if, for the sake of argument, we were to admit the general

truth of the conviction, could it not very plausibly be maintained that heart and head are so far in intellectual interdependence that the deeper the interest felt in any book really worthy of study the better would it be likely to be understood? But we do not pursue this thought, as the latent premise that the Bible must be interpreted in the same manner as we interpret any other book, is a premise which our third and fourth presuppositions do not allow us to admit.

How the Bible ought to be regarded.

We will assume then, that a true and real understanding of the Bible will always be greatly affected by the subjective condition and feelings of the reader in regard to its real nature and claims, and will now simply answer the question before us, In what light ought the really earnest student to regard the Bible? What ought to be his feelings and inner convictions in reference to it when he is preparing with all seriousness to read and to study it.

The best form perhaps in which the answer can be given will be through the medium of a brief consideration of how the Bible has been regarded in different periods in the history of the Church. The true answer, and, it may be said, the unvarying answer of the Apostolic and

Reformed Church of England, so far as it is expressed in her Prayer Book, will thus be more fully recognized and appreciated.

Of the aspect in which Holy Scripture was regarded in the Apostolic age but little doubt can be entertained. That it was inspired by God, that it was God who spake to the fathers in the prophets, that these holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and that the ordinary forms of citation refer the cited words directly or indirectly to God, cannot be denied by any sober reader of the New Testament; nor can we doubt that when Clement of Rome speaks of the Scriptures as the "true sayings of the Holy Ghost[1]" he expresses in general terms the universal belief of the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic Church. And this belief was, in succeeding ages, always in the foreground, though the history of interpretation tells us, mournfully enough, how it became by degrees so obscured and occluded by the varying systems of exposition, that for several centuries the Bible was mainly regarded as the Book of Illumination and of esoteric knowledge. The allegorical system of interpretation to which this mode of regarding the

[1] *Ep. ad Cor.* I. 45. For early patristic statements to a similar effect, see *Aids to Faith*, p. 498 (Lond. 1861).

Bible was very largely due had, it is true, given way before the influence of the sober school of Antioch; still, the fourfold sense of Holy Scripture (the literal, the allegorical, the moral, and what was called the anagogic)[1] was maintained by many of the best interpreters down to the very days of the Reformation. Some traces of a recognition of the practical uses of Holy Scripture and its relation to the individual soul appeared from time to time among the mystical writers, and even Schoolmen could speak of it as "bearing into our soul the divine nature[2]." Still, for the most part, the Bible was either overshadowed by tradition, and a Book of the Church which the Church alone could interpret, or a Book of Revelation which only the initiated could ever hope to understand.

The great change in the estimate of the Bible came with the Reformation. The Book of Illumination then became again the Book that "makes us wise unto salvation[3]," or, in other

[1] See Hagenbach, *History of Christian Doctrine*, § 162, vol. ii. p. 172 (Transl.), and comp. Farrar, *History of Interpretation* (Bampton Lectures for 1885), p. 276 (Lond. 1886). This interesting volume contains much useful matter in reference to the general question alluded to in the text.

[2] Scotus Erigena, *de Div. Nat.* i. cap. 66, cited by Hagenbach, *History of Christian Doctrine*, § 159, vol. ii. p. 161 (Transl.).

[3] 2 Tim. iii. 15.

words, the true Book of Life. As such it has been received by our Mother Church of England, and as such it must be received by every faithful son of our Church—no Book merely to teach moral duties, as great thinkers have been satisfied in regarding it—no merely Sacred Book of Christianity, to be ranked among the other so-called Sacred Books of the world,—but as the one unique Book that alike *is*, and alike *contains*, the Word of the only and eternal God. We adopt both of these last-named statements as each expressing a fundamental truth,—the first the union of the divine and the human in Scripture, the second the distinction between them; both of which truths are necessary to be maintained as precluding an unduly exaggerated, or an unduly attenuated, view of inspiration [1].

The rightful estimate of Scripture.

This is the estimate of Holy Scripture which must hold its due place in the deepest convictions of the student. It is with these feelings as regards the Book that he will be best spiritually equipped for reading it. He will approach it as verily God's Book, and yet as written by the medium and instrumentality

[1] See Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, § 240, p. 405 (Transl.).

of men whom God vouchsafed to select as the exponents of His revelation, and as the best qualified among the children of men for the duty to which they were called. This conviction steadily borne in mind will enable him to regard the blessed Book in the double aspect under which it must always be regarded by the loyal Churchman as well as by the earnest believer. Such a Book, so written, and bearing, as the written must ever bear when contrasted with the oral, the very token of considered and reconsidered thought, the outward sign of an inspiration that had dwelt, as it were, in the soul of the recipient, and was designed to be for all time, and, it may be, for aeons yet to come, —for can the form of the Gospel story ever melt away?—such a Book, so written, must be for the Church as well as for the individual, and must ever be so regarded by the faithful reader. The Bible, God be praised, is and ever must be, the Book of Salvation, but it must also be the Book of everlasting Truth—the Book that rests on the broad-based foundation of the Church [1], and so is the Book of the Church in the best, purest, and truest acceptation of the words.

What vistas do such thoughts seem to disclose to us. How, as we approach the deeper study

[1] See 1 Tim. iii. 15.

of such a Book, does the love, the ever-growing love, which every hour of heart-whole study never fails to augment, seem to become more and more sublimated until it melts, as it were, into that awed reverence which the saint of the Old Covenant felt for the Law and the Prophets, and which the saint of the New Covenant has felt, not only for that heritage of the past, but for that eternal heritage of past, present, and future—the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When such feelings exercise their full sway in the soul, and when a reverence of such a kind is in any degree consciously felt by him who takes into his hands the Book of Life, the conviction may humbly be entertained that the preparation requisite has been vouchsafed; and that we may enter into the details of biblical study, without fear of losing that heart-interest in the revelation on which all true spiritual progress is ever found to depend. Without this spiritual preparation there is always the danger of being tempted to think that after all we may study the Bible as we would study any other book, and that spiritual preparation really relates more to the profit afterwards to be derived than to the reading, marking, and learning at the time of actual study. On such matters it is of course impossible to speak except under the persuasion which the

circumstances of the case seem to create in the individual mind; but to me at least it does seem most natural to believe that all procedures of interpretation are enhanced and quickened by that spirit of mingled love and reverence to which we have alluded as the spirit which ought to animate the true and receptive reader of God's Holy Word.

At any rate, even if these mysteries as to the influence of the spiritual on the intellectual are to be considered mysteries of which no precise cognizance can be taken, still this plain thought seems to remain,—that if this Book of Life is what we have now regarded it, there must be a spiritual preparation for the study of such a Book which can never be dispensed with. We are entering into the Presence Chamber; and the same voice that spake to Moses[1] and to Joshua[2] speaks still unto us; we are standing upon holy ground, and we must make such preparation as ought to be made when such blessings are vouchsafed to us.

The true preparation is prayer. Such preparations are often forgotten; but to forget them is to leave a veil on the heart—a veil that prevents "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ[3]" streaming

[1] Exodus iii. 5. [2] Joshua v. 15. [3] 2 Cor. iv. 6.

in upon the reader, and leaves him wandering in the darkling and frigid uncertainties of the letter.

Never must it be forgotten, in the study of Holy Scripture, that without the abiding help of Him who inspired the writer, the written word will ever remain to him the letter—the lifeless and even the life-destroying letter—the letter, and nothing more. That help is ever freely offered. He who illuminated historians, prophets, apostles, and evangelists, and spake through that matured form of their inspiration—their written words,—will still illuminate him who would humbly seek to interpret those words. To him that knocketh it will be opened; but the full and free opening, and the blessed voice from within are only vouchsafed to the meditative and prayerful spirit, and to him who can truly say out of the depths of a faithful and Bible-loving heart, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth [1]."

[1] 1 Sam. iii. 9.

ADDRESS III.

Study of Holy Scripture.

PART II.

In the foregoing address we have set forth those preliminary considerations which must be discussed before we can with propriety enter upon the practical details which experience may commend to us in connexion with the direct study of the written Word.

Recapitulation.

It has been necessary in the first place clearly to recognize that we are really not dealing with a book, but, in a certain sense, a library, the component parts of which, in regard of age, subject, and style, differ very widely from one another.

While, however, we recognize this diversity, we have seen, in the second place, that we must clearly recognize one unifying element which pervades the whole contents of the marvellous collection; and this marvellous collection we have, in the third place, seen to be the written medium of God's revelation to man; and, in the fourth place, we have endeavoured to realize

this most certain truth, that each writer who was permitted to contribute to this written medium was especially equipped for his responsible work.

We concluded with some comments on the spirit and inward feelings in which the study of such a revelation, so diversified yet so unified, so disclosed by God yet so written by the hand of man, is to be approached by the meditative Christian reader. We now pass onward to consider what experience would seem to show to be the most fruitful and profitable system of studying this revelation systematically and in detail.

Scripture to be read in original languages.

1. The first principle we must lay down is obvious and self-evident, and yet, there is every reason to fear, most imperfectly recognized and acted on. The principle is that the Scriptures can certainly never be read with full and complete profit to the soul unless read in the languages in which they were set forth to mankind, and which the Holy Ghost vouchsafed to use as the media of His communications. This principle I do not base on literary propriety or professional faithfulness; and I am not going to argue it on these grounds, valid and convincing as they may be. The true ground upon which the duty of reading the Holy Scriptures in the original

languages really rests is this—that, as, in every case of an original and a translation, the original must reasonably be regarded as a more exact presentment of the mind of the writer than can be conveyed by any translation, so certainly it must be in the case of Holy Scripture, written as it is in two old-world languages, of which neither can be regarded as having much affinity with our own. Now if this be so, and we honestly desire to know all that can be known of the mind of the writer, our duty to study, in the selfsame language in which he clothed his thoughts, the words he has written, would seem to be beyond question. When, however, we add to this the presupposition that the writer was inspired by God adequately to record what he was moved to record, then our duty to study the writer in the language in which he wrote, and so to approach, as nearly as we can presume to approach, to the full mind of the writer, does not follow simply *a fortiori* but *a fortissimo*.

This would seem to be the most valid and indeed most persuasive form in which the duty of reading Scripture in the original languages can be brought home to any really earnest mind. All that can plausibly be called in question is our tacit assumption that a thoroughly good translation—and in the case of Holy Scripture

we have such—cannot as fully and exactly present to us the mind of the writer as his original record. But can it be really and validly called in question? We may concede at once that all that is necessary to salvation is, by God's mercy, set forth plainly enough in the translations we possess. On this there can be no doubt. We are now dwelling, however, on approaching, as nearly as we can approach, to the mind and thoughts of the inspired writer; and, under this aspect of the question, is not this certainly true, that—especially in such languages as Hebrew and Greek, when contrasted with our own—there are shades of thought, connotations, and impressions, conveyed to the mind by the very nature and genius of the original languages which no translation can ever adequately reproduce? And if there are such, are they not, in such a subject as the Holy Scripture, worthy of our most reverent observation and study?

And that there are these shades of thought to be recognized, these connotations to be observed, these impressions to be felt, what earnest reader of Holy Scripture, if he has even no more than a moderate knowledge of the original languages, can possibly doubt whenever he really reads *any continuous portion* either in Hebrew or in

Greek? But this, I fear, is what is but rarely done. The average student, in reading the original, either obliterates any sensibility of perception of the hues of thought which it would otherwise have ministered to him, by plunging at once into the commentary before him, and losing all the fragrance of the text in the mechanism of the interpretation; or he makes the English version his only means of arriving at the mind of the writer, and refers only to the original from time to time to assure himself of the correctness of the translation.

In both of these ways of studying Holy Scripture he loses much of that which the sacred text would otherwise have imparted. But let him only make the trial of putting aside for a time commentary and translation, and reading attentively and perceptively a whole paragraph of the original, and I will be bold to say that a devout reader, with no more than a moderate knowledge of the language before him, would be conscious of the whole meaning and tenor of the paragraph being lit up, as it were, and entering into the mind with a mysteriously added brightness and significance. This being done, he may then profitably turn to his version and his commentary.

Verifying illustrations.

It may be thought that what has just been said involves much more of imagination than reality. Let it then be tested. Let any really devout student of Holy Scripture make the trial for himself. Let him take, for example, the first eight verses of the Bible and the last eight verses, and read, in the original languages, and in the manner above specified, with all the perceptive faculties fully called out, each passage in its continuity. Will it be possible for any one so reading the first group of verses not to derive some impressions from the majestic simplicity of the original which, it may be fairly said, he could not receive from any translation,—the dreary desolation, as well as utter emptiness of all things, the hovering of the brooding Spirit on the primal waters, the making —not the creating—of the separating expanse, and the emergence, as it were, of sky above, to be followed afterwards by the more defined emergence of earth below,—shades of thought all recognizable clearly enough in the original, but only dimly to be perceived in the version, words like "firmament" preventing the completeness of the recognition. It is hard, however, to analyze these connotations. They are perhaps to be felt rather than defined,—but felt they

will be by every thoughtful reader who may have even no more than a moderate knowledge of the original.

Very similarly may we observe the suggestive shades of thoughts conveyed to us by the widely different language in the widely different passage with which the sacred volume concludes. All is different, but the fact that impressions are conveyed to the mind by the original Greek which are not conveyed, or, at best, only partially conveyed, by the version, is beyond all possible doubt.

Let the reader take in his hands a good critical edition of the Greek Testament and read carefully and thoughtfully from Rev. xxii. 14 to the end. New lights will dawn upon him almost in every verse. How the words of the true reading in verse 14, "that wash their robes," not only call out the thought of that by which alone whiteness can ever be brought back, but by their participial form and their tense remind the reader that the act must be marked by humble patience and continuity. How again in the next verse the original suggests a probability that the Saviour's words are much more than the mere declaration that those spoken of "are" without the holy city, and are really a solemn prohibition of

entry [1]. How, further, throughout the passage the tense of the solemn advent call in the Greek conveys what the English cannot, that the Lord is ever coming, and that it may ever be said by the faithful and loving heart, that He is a present and not a far distant Lord, "nigh [2] even at the doors," and only not yet revealed.

But more need not be said to prove the vital importance of reading God's Word in that form in which it has been communicated to man. The wonder is that the necessity of so reading is not more deeply felt, especially at a time like the present, when, by the mercy of God, a greater earnestness is to be recognized in all departments of pastoral work. It really would seem as if the very variety of this work was calling off attention from this, which is the mainspring of all spiritual energy—the steady persistent study of God's Holy Word, and especially in that form in which He has permitted it to be communicated to man. Is it not our special duty to declare the whole

[1] Düsterdieck (*in loc.*) adopts the imperatival rendering "foras, scil. sunto." If the particle δέ be retained after ἔξω, the ordinary declaratory rendering would seem more natural. If it be omitted (with Rev. al.), the balance may seem to be very slightly the other way. The obvious objection is however the abruptness introduced in a passage which does not seem to suggest it. [2] Mark xiii. 29.

counsel of God to the souls that are committed to us? And is it possible, after what has been said, to do this thoroughly and with real faithfulness, without a competent knowledge of the original languages in which Scripture has come down to us?

Study of Greek and Hebrew.

It is here, then, that a great change may be made. If there is to be any real and durable advance in sacred study, it is here especially that it must be made. And is it, after all, so very hard to make it? Our younger men, at any rate, may lead the way. They can begin by reviving what, I fear, must, in a great majority of cases, be spoken of as their fading knowledge of Greek. And there is no better way of beginning than by making it a rule that all their private and devotional reading of the New Testament shall be in the original Greek. It is simply marvellous how the observance of this homely rule will be found to quicken and to stimulate, and how a love of God's Word will be called out to a degree that perhaps never had been felt before. It is the Word, as it was written, speaking to the soul. The knowledge of Greek can generally be revived. But it is confessedly, in most cases, a very different matter in regard of the study of Hebrew. There is, I fear, a widespread and largely deterrent conviction that

Hebrew, if not, strictly speaking, a very difficult language, does nevertheless present such difficulties to the beginner that the study of the language will, in the great majority of cases, never be continued; and that so it is really better not to begin what, it is alleged, will soon have to be laid aside as consuming too much time, and putting too great a strain on the memory owing to its multitudinous details. There is some truth in all this; but it will commonly be found that this prejudice against Hebrew owes its existence to the fact that in most cases the student has tried to teach himself, and from the peculiarity of the language has commonly failed. The initial details have overwhelmed him.

The true way of beginning, I am confident, is to secure competent assistance, and with it to break through the first stratum of difficulties. Get the eye well accustomed to the novel character, and to the suffixed vowels, and do not make any advance in the grammar until the power of reading fluently, and especially with a correct accent, has been fully acquired—the reason being this, that in this manner the leading principles of the vowel-changes, and the countless rules to which they give rise, will have been learnt, in great measure instinctively,

and exemplified by the simple necessities and conditions of utterance. The first steps in Hebrew—and these steps are always those that most discourage—depend far more on a good exercise of eye and of ear than is commonly supposed.

After ground has thus been well broken, progress will become really rapid. The student will be able to begin the reading of simple portions far sooner than he could have supposed; and if the hint already given of using exclusively the original in devotional reading be steadily followed as reading-power increases, the results, after not many months, will be found to be not only encouraging but surprising.

I do trust, then, that the study of the Old Testament in the original language may spread widely among our younger clergy, and that the serious reproach of inability to read the first volume of the Book of Life, in the form in which it has come down to us, may gradually be wiped away from the priesthood of the English Church.

Enough has now been said on this first principle,—and yet not more than enough, for of this I am fully persuaded, that until the practice of reading the Scriptures in the original languages be largely extended, there will be no

real advance in any of the more important departments of sacred study.

Preparatory study a Necessity.

2. We now pass to a second principle, which is scarcely of less importance than that which we have already considered, and it is this—not to study any portion of Holy Scripture without preliminary historical and literary preparation. This rule, however, is, I fear, very largely neglected, especially in reference to the Old Testament. The Bible is tacitly assumed to be one Book, all parts of it more or less homogeneous; whereas it is a collection of many books, and these similar only in the broad fact of each embodying a revelation from God, and having been written by one who was specially inspired for the work. In every other respect the relation of the component parts is, as we have already stated, of the most complete dissimilarity, alike in respect of age, purpose, literary characteristics, and spiritual teaching. And it is exactly this which the general reader either habitually forgets, or habitually ignores. He tacitly assumes that each book, by the very fact of being included in the Bible, stands on the same spiritual level with the rest, and may be used, apart from its historical surroundings, for the confirmation of general religious truth,

or for the verification of doctrine. The consequence is, that a real knowledge of the Bible is far less frequently met with, even among those who are its appointed exponents, than might naturally have been supposed.

Good Introductions much needed.

The study of a really good Introduction is thus of the utmost necessity in the case of each separate portion of God's Holy Word, if we would attain to a true knowledge of the whole, and of that mystery of unity in plurality, and of continuity in diversity, which differentiates the Bible from every other book in the world. A really good Introduction, however, is not very readily to be met with. To deserve the name it should always include these four particulars:—First, as full an account of the historical circumstances of the writer and of his relation to his own times as can be obtained: Secondly, the general nature of the literary and linguistic characteristics of his writing: Thirdly, the circumstances, as far as they can be traced, that led to the book having been written: and lastly, its substance and purport, and the general spiritual tenor of the revelation.

Such an Introduction not only imparts information, but awakens attention and quickens

observation; and it is just this awakened attention and quickened observation that form the indispensable equipment for the salutary reading of God's Holy Word. It is not enough generally to understand what we read. What we have before us is, under some special form, whether historical, prophetical, or didactic, a revelation from Almighty God; the words we read are the words of one who was inwardly moved to deliver to us the communication, and assisted in his mode of making of it; and rightly to appreciate such a revelation, and fruitfully to receive such a communication, every spiritual faculty must be strengthened by preparatory study. A heart-interest must be awakened before we begin to read the written word, which, when we come to read that word, makes us love it as well as understand it; and such an interest can in no way be more successfully awakened than by the well-written and suggestive Introduction. Such a preparation can never be dispensed with.

The difficulty in the matter is, that this high-class Introduction is not always readily accessible. It forms usually a part, especially in the Old Testament, of the large continuous Commentary, or has to be looked for in the larger Bible Cyclopaedias, and is thus often quite

out of the reach of the ordinary student. What is needed is a republication in a cheap form of such Introductions as have been alluded to; and this need, I am glad to say, in the case of one leading Commentary, will shortly be supplied[1].

How the Bible can best be read.

3. We now approach the Word itself, in some degree prepared, as far as outward aids can go, for the blessing of reading it. But how can we read it most profitably? Certainly not as we should read any other book of great thoughts that might come into our hands, and on which time may have set the seal of long ages of acceptance. And yet, as we well know, the current answer to the question is exactly the contrary. It is steadily maintained, with a somewhat wearisome iteration, that, after all, this is the only way of reading Holy Scripture that will stand the test of sober and impartial reflection. But is it so? Is there not a distinctly qualitative difference between the Bible and any other book that may be compared with it, which this reflection, if really sober and im-

[1] I here allude to the large Commentary in eight volumes, published by Messrs. Cassell, of which I was the Editor. The Introductions to the different books of Holy Scripture have now been extracted from the large work, and gathered into two moderate sized volumes which will, I believe, appear very shortly.

partial, could never fail to recognize? If it be admitted—and, at any rate, no one who claims the name of a Christian could refuse to make the admission—that, define it as we may, there is another agency traceable in the Book than merely human illumination,—if, in any sense however modified, disclosure from God and an adequate ability in the writer to make the disclosure do plainly differentiate the Volume from any and every other volume with which it could possibly be compared,—then surely common sense itself must prescribe, at any rate to a Christian reader, some manner of reading the unique Volume that does recognize its uniqueness, and its difference from every other book that the stream of time has borne down to us. And now what is that manner of reading to be?

The threefold method of reading.

If, in answering this question, I may fall back on my own experience, I can at once say that I am persuaded there is no more real and helpful manner of reading God's Holy Word than in adopting the order of the familiar collect—reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting. If we may take these words as our summary, and sketch out a system of Biblical study that shall be in harmony with them, we seem to have a threefold system of reading Holy

Scripture very clearly prescribed to us: First—after due preparation as above specified—a simple and attentive reading (in the original language) of the whole Book (if short) which we may have chosen for our study, or of a connected portion of it if the whole could not be carefully read through at a single sitting of moderate length; secondly, a closer reading of it, paragraph by paragraph, in which all the difficulties and disputable passages which may have been noted and felt in the first reading are fully investigated, and, as far as possible, cleared up; thirdly, a more meditative reading, in which the whole attention is turned to the spiritual truth conveyed and to the spiritual deductions that may be made from the paragraph,—and further, any distinctive teaching that may seem to be peculiar to the passage.

The object of the first reading is thus to catch, not only the general *mind* of the writer, but those shades of thought to which we have already alluded, which an attentive and consecutive reading of the original is always found most distinctly to supply. We "read" and we "mark."

The object of the second, or, as it may be termed, the *interpretative* reading, is to realize

the *meaning* of every portion of what is read,—to "learn" in the fullest sense of the words; while the object of the third, or, as it might be designated, the *reflective* reading of the passage, is to enable soul and spirit to draw forth the spiritual teaching of every part, and "inwardly to digest" and assimilate it.

The transition from this to the true devotional reading, in which the soul dwells wholly on the passage as a *message* and a revelation, as the voice of God to the inward ear, is obvious and immediate, and it is to this that all faithful and reverent reading of Holy Scripture should utimately lead us.

But this statement of the threefold method of reading God's Holy Word will not be complete without a few comments on the particular helps and subsidies which each form of reading will separately require. Such comments will not be without their use even to the more advanced student, as there is no more common mistake in the study of Scripture than to use concurrently expositions which, read separately, would be found of great spiritual usefulness, but when read together produce in the mind confusion and uncertainty. Each form of reading must have its appropriate helps and appliances, a few of which we will now proceed to specify.

Helps for the first reading.

(*a*) In a first reading, when the object is to obtain the general scope of the writing, and to catch the shades of thought which a careful reading of the original is certain to bring out, the fewer the aids the better. The less that the attention is carried away from the currents of inspired thought, the more spiritually profitable will be the reading. For such a reading it will commonly be found quite enough to use a plain grammar, a good special lexicon such as that of Grimm, as edited by Dr. Thayer, and two or three good versions—especially the Revised Version, the Vulgate, and the best available translation (unless there be a knowledge of the language in the original) of the ancient Syriac Version. These will be quite sufficient to remove any obvious difficulties as to the general meaning of the words, and should only be referred to when such difficulties arise. Other and greater difficulties will be felt and noticed, but these it will be best to leave for the second reading, and, at this stage, to have no recourse to the commentary. The mind should distinctly cognize the presence of these greater difficulties, and, in each case, adopt provisionally its own interpretations; but there should be as little interruption as possible in the perceptive

thought of the reader—the true object in this stage of the study being a realization of the general meaning and a clear recognition of the impressions and shades of thought which the holy words seem designed to convey.

The purely English reader might adopt in outline the same principle—the principle really being to try and think out the explanation of real or apparent difficulties, to let the mind exert itself, and to postpone the use of the commentary.

(*b*) When we address ourselves to the second or interpretative reading of Scripture, help must be increased, and of a distinctly expository nature. Here the difficulty is selection. The commentaries that are now accessible to the reader in our own language are so numerous, that the ordinary student commonly finds that the best help that can here be offered to him is a little guidance as to the principles on which he should choose his interpretative aids. His exact position now is this. His first reading has disclosed to him many details on which he finds that he needs further information,—some technical and grammatical difficulties, some difficulties arising from inability to realize the sequence of thought, and a few greater and

Helps for the second reading.

graver difficulties which obviously belong to the domain of doctrine and controversy. On what principle is he to choose his commentary? What has just been said will to a certain extent have suggested the answer. The commentary that will most help him in this second and interpretative reading is a commentary that first of all sets forth with precision the true grammatical meaning of the words wherever difficulty is likely to be felt. This, if well done, and with a watchful avoidance of superfluous detail, will of itself have cleared away many minor difficulties, and will probably have thrown considerable light on the connexion of thought and general tenor of the reasoning.

But the literal and grammatical interpretation, though an indispensable basis, is very far from being sufficient. The historical element now comes in under various forms, and supplies elucidatory details which, especially in passages involving doctrinal details, are quite as indispensable as the linguistic and syntactic details of the grammatical element. No commentary that is deficient in this particular will be found to supply the full interpretative guidance which the student will require in the second reading of Scripture in which we are now supposing him to be engaged. He will espe-

cially find the value of the historical element when he passes onward to the still graver difficulties of doctrinal interpretation. Here, however, in my judgment, a good commentary should be cautious and reserved. It should set forth with all possible distinctness the doctrinal import of the particular passage under consideration, but should leave to the best doctrinal treatises (to which careful references should be given) the discussion of other and perhaps seemingly conflicting passages which might appear to present a different aspect of the doctrine which the particular passage might have brought into the foreground.

What has been said will perhaps be of some use to the student in his choice of a commentary; but it will be mainly in reference to the New Testament, in which the difficulty of choice is now becoming increasingly great. It is otherwise with the Old Testament. Here there is such a comparative paucity of really high-class commentaries, except it be in the case of the Psalms and the Prophetical Books, that it may be of some little service to the reader who may need a fuller exposition than well-known English commentaries undertake to supply, and more precise reference to the original Hebrew, if I mention the long and valuable series

of commentaries on, I believe, every book of the Old Testament, that will be found, translated from the German, in the comprehensive Foreign Theological Library of Messrs. Clark of Edinburgh. The same Library may be mentioned in reference to the New Testament; and it may be further mentioned that, by the enterprise of the same publishers, the whole of the valuable Commentaries of the late Dr. Meyer are now accessible to the English student.

For the interpretative reading of Scripture the help is trustworthy and abounding.

Helps for the third reading.

(*c*) The third form of reading Holy Scripture, which I have designated as the *reflective*, is of a clearly different aspect, but, in reference to the inner life, is of even greater spiritual importance. In this form the whole attention of the reader, who may now be considered as sufficiently prepared by the two former modes of reading adequately to give it, is devoted to the truths, spiritual and practical, which flow, directly or indirectly, from each passage that may be under consideration. These truths will commonly assume a more or less connected form, owing to their being found in continuous portions of the same revelation, and will thus often stand in supplementary relation to each other.

For this form of reading no great amount of extraneous assistance beside that already obtained in the second form of reading will be found to be necessary. There is, however, one expositor so uniquely eminent in drawing from Holy Scripture its deeper spiritual meaning, that it may be well for the student always to have at hand, for the New Testament, the *Gnomon* of Bengel[1], and to acquire through the help of this most introspective expositor the

[1] This remarkable and most suggestive commentary, though published 150 years ago, is still as fresh and as helpful as it was when it appeared. It contains the accumulated observations of eight and twenty years of continuous study. During that period Bengel was the Tutor at the Theological Seminary at Denkendorf in Würtemberg; and it appears that he went through the whole of the New Testament with his pupils every two years. The year after he left Denkendorf for the prelacy of Herbrechtingen in 1741 he published the *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, the great value of which does not appear to have been at first fully recognised, as his works brought him in but little pecuniary profit. His attractive Latinity was due to his constant study of Cicero's letters (*ad Familiares*), an edition of which he published for the use of his pupils at Denkendorf. It is worthy of notice that he attributed to his early study of metaphysics and mathematics that clearness in analysing and expounding the language of Scripture which is so distinctive a characteristic of his commentaries. He was born in June 1687, and died in November 1752. An interesting memoir of his life and works has been written by Dr. Burk of Würtemberg, and translated by Rev. R. F. Walker; Lond. 1837.

aptitude of drawing from the Holy Word its full message to the soul. The spiritual influence that this form of reading will always be found to exercise on the meditative reader is more to be felt than described. It is this reflective reading that pre-eminently evokes and quickens that love of God's Holy Word which is the very sunshine of the soul, and, as we have already said, prepares for the more definitely devotional study of Holy Scripture to which all true modes of reading the Word are designed to lead, and in which they all ultimately converge.

Such is the threefold system of studying Holy Scripture which long experience leads me to recommend to all my younger brethren, and indeed to all who desire to learn and "to receive with pure affection" the message of the Book of Life. The system is simple, and easy to be followed; and will, I am confident, if followed, impart not only a more accurate knowledge of the written word, but also that heart-interest, without which no study of the Bible can become ultimately profitable, whether for doctrine or for discipline, or for that wisdom unto salvation which, as an Apostle reminds us[1], Scripture ever freely ministers to the believing soul.

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 15.

Doctrinal Study of Scripture.

Little further remains to be said, unless it be to mention one valuable addition that may be made to the system which I have just specified. And the addition is this—the practice of noting, especially on the third or reflective reading, the particular form in which the doctrinal statements are expressed, in the case of each one of the inspired writers on whose writings the student may, for the time, be more especially engaged. This obviously applies more exclusively to the New Testament, though it is by no means without its application to the books of the Old Testament. The particular teaching of each holy writer is thus seen in the form in which divine truth was apprehended by the mind to which it was communicated. That form is often found to differ, sometimes very instructively, in the cases of individual writers; but the differences, like the differing hues in one and the same pure ray, only tend to cause the divine truth to be more completely perceived and realized in its essential oneness and purity.

We have but few books in English that set forth with any sufficient fulness the substance of the leading doctrines of our Faith as presented to us by the inspired writers of Holy Scripture, and more particularly of the New Testament.

The individual student must thus make the effort for himself, and, as he reads, note carefully the form of teaching which each writer was moved to adopt. Such an effort will bring with it a full reward. Distinctions in doctrine will be more and more readily recognized; the exact points in which the holy writers may appear to differ will be rightly referred to the differing points of view under which they regarded the same vital truths; and the best possible preparation will have been made for the systematic study of Christian doctrine.

To that study we now pass onward, and devote to it the two remaining addresses of the present series; the first of these containing the outlines of the fundamental doctrines of God and of Man, the second and concluding address the outlines of the chief doctrines that relate to the communion of God and Man, and directly or indirectly flow from it.

ADDRESS IV.

Study of Christian Doctrine.

PART I.

We now pass onward to the difficult and momentous subject of Christian doctrine, and to some consideration of the best mode of studying it.

Preliminary Questions.

In approaching this subject the first question that will obviously present itself is what we are precisely to understand by the term Christian doctrine. To such a question different answers may be given, varying with the latitude assigned to the term Christian; but, for the purposes of this address, it will be quite enough to say that we understand by Christian doctrine that body of spiritual truths, relating in part to this world, and in part to the world to come, which every-one who believes in Christ as the eternal Son of God must unreservedly accept as necessary for his soul's health, and for his guidance in the state in which God may have been pleased to have placed him.

If this answer be accepted, a second question

at once arises, where this body of spiritual truths is to be found, and on what authority it rests. To this question the answer is readily forthcoming—that it is to be found partly in the Creeds of the Universal Church and partly in the self-same Scriptures out of which those Creeds were formulated.

Construction of a system of doctrine.

As we thus find that we are referred to Holy Scripture as the ultimate source and authority, it might at first seem that the formation of a connected and coherent body of *credenda* could not involve any serious difficulties. Assuming Holy Scripture to be, what we have presupposed it to be, a revelation from God through the medium of men who were specially inspired to convey it in writing to mankind, it might be considered that all that would have to be done in constructing a system of Christian doctrine would be to fall back upon the Creeds and the Articles of our Church,—as both being authoritative deductions from Holy Scripture,—and, wheresoever these formularies might be silent, on such statements of Holy Scripture as might bear upon the questions at issue.

Such a mode of forming a body of *credenda* would certainly not be difficult, and could not be open to any reasonable objection. The pro-

cedure would rest upon two assumptions—that the authority of Scripture is final and unassailable, and that the judgment of the interpreting Church is absolutely and completely to be relied on. And on these two assumptions thousands and tens of thousands happily still rest in undisturbed security. In cases of difficulty the individual places himself under the guidance of the community; and if the community rests, as does our Mother Church of England, on three Creeds, a Catechism of Apostolic simplicity, Articles of Faith of almost unique clearness and precision, and an ultimate and ever-open appeal to God's Holy Word, such a guidance never fails and never can fail to lead to the truth as it is in Jesus, and to the blessedness of the peace of God.

Judgment of the Church.

But this can only be said in reference to those who in all humility of soul yield themselves unreservedly to the guidance that they have sought for. To all such the Church declares the doctrine, and by that very declaration awakens within their souls the ever reassuring testimony of the Holy Ghost. For these, and such as these, Christian doctrine might easily be set forth in all its attractive outlines of evangelical simplicity.

But these gentle spirits are now becoming, we fear, fewer in number. There are tokens everywhere of anxiety in regard of the real validity of some of our articles of faith. Everywhere there seems to be a sort of spiritual disquietude; an absence of true conviction that silently makes itself felt even in otherwise faithful and loyal hearts, and causes shadows to fall on the soul which faith does not seem wholly able to dissipate. In the subject that is now before us this disquietude often takes the form of a kind of impatience with what are deemed to be the unnecessary trammels of formulated doctrine, and the question, if not actually expressed, yet no less inwardly felt, often arises in the heart, Is all this definition really necessary? What if these elaborate systems of Christian doctrine should ultimately be found to be reducible to a few simple, intelligible, and vital principles? What if the whole imposing fabric of dogmatics, built up as it has been by ages of wearying controversy, should now actually be crumbling away under the disintegrating influences of modern speculation? Such questions and such thoughts are in the air; and, if we may judge from what would seem to be the increasing drift of current opinion, are not likely to diminish as time goes onward.

Authority of Scripture.

One of the two assumptions then to which we have alluded, the reliance that may be placed on the judgment of the interpreting Church, seems, to say the very least, becoming weaker. How fares it with the other? Can we say that the authority of Holy Scripture is still regarded as final and unassailable? Alas, no. It is impossible to disguise from ourselves that of late the authority of the written Word, especially in the Old Testament, has plainly been weakened, and, what is most grievous, by those to whom it was reasonable to look as its supporters and defenders. Portions of Holy Scripture involving facts to which apostles have appealed, and on which vital doctrine has been based, have been characterized as 'of the nature of myth[1]'; parts of the Sacred Word, to which the Saviour of the world has been pleased to refer under the name of the writers immemorially associated with them, have been declared to owe their origin to late and unknown writers under the cover of old and honoured names; prophecy has been deemed in many instances to have faded into contemporary history, and even the plainest utterances of Messianic hope have in

[1] *Lux Mundi*, p. 357 (ed. 10). Lond. 1890.

some cases been set aside as either doubtful or illusory.

Nature of present attempt.

Under these sad circumstances, when the two assumptions to which I have alluded are, to say the very least, regarded with doubtfulness and anxiety, and when the authority of Holy Scripture and the authority of the interpreting Church are both to some extent invalidated by the spirit of the age even within the Church itself, the attempt to set forth a coherent body of *credenda*, and to point out the best mode of studying the doctrine, is by no means without difficulty. Still, the attempt must be made to place before the student some outlines of a logically connected and coherent system of Christian doctrine, and in doing so incidentally to demonstrate the solid foundations on which the system, viewed as a whole, may certainly appear to rest. It will thus be a contribution, however simple and humble, towards what a great thinker has spoken of as the standing problem of the Church [1]—the apprehending of Christian truth as truth, and as in fullest accordance with the principles on which truth permanently rests.

[1] Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, § 1. 3, vol. 1 p. 22 (Transl.) Edinb. 1880.

My task is thus really of a twofold nature: to specify the outlines of Christian doctrine in such an order and connexion as will be likely to make the study of it most profitable to the student, and also, by that very order and connexion, to prove inferentially the reasonableness and indeed the truth of the Christian Faith. Our undertaking therefore involves more than good arrangement and helpfulness of method. Primarily it deals with the *ita*, but, as it has been well said, "every *ita* contains a hidden *quare*[1]," and the *quare* thus presented often produces a greater effect and carries with it more real persuasiveness than when set forth in the usual forms of connected argument. This is especially true in matters of religion, in which happily something more than merely logic is operative in the soul. Experience constantly shows that in those elements of doctrine in which the mere reason may find the greatest difficulty, the development of the inner principles of the doctrine, and especially their connexion with other and allied truths, will often convey such an impression of the absolute truth of Christianity that its deeper doctrines become realizable. The student, for example, who might have felt many a difficulty in refer-

[1] Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, § 33, p. 65 (Transl.).

ence to such a doctrine as the Atonement, will frequently become so powerfully impressed by a careful setting forth of the teaching connected with the person of Christ and the nature of His work as to pass, almost unconsciously, into a heart-whole acceptance of all the blessed mysteries of reconciling and redeeming love. Difficulty, again, on such a doctrine as the Resurrection of the Body may in great measure melt away when the connected teaching of the Last Things is soberly set forth. The order and interdependence of Christian doctrine is a subsidiary argument of no small evidential validity.

Two leading principles.

We now proceed with the details of our responsible undertaking, but still must briefly pause to specify two principles which must be admitted and accepted throughout this present address and the address that will follow it.

Our first principle is this—that, for the due appreciation of Christian doctrine, there must be in the soul of the student a clearly shown susceptibility in reference to truth. No sound system of dogmatics ever makes doubt its starting point. It assumes the absolute truth of Christianity, and labours to make that truth more recognizable and more easy to be appre-

hended; but in doing so it requires the presence of that intellectual love of truth, and indeed of Christian truth, that readily recognizes, and is willing to consider, whatever may be rationally and intelligently presented to it. There must at the very least be no inward and antecedent antagonism.

Our second principle which must be accepted is this—that Faith must be regarded as the real nerve of all Christian dogmatics. No true system of Christian doctrine can ever be evolved or formulated without it; faith being the quickening element throughout. If it is the contact of the subject with the object that gives birth to experience, it is that conviction or growing certitude which emerges in the procedure that is the animating principle of the knowledge which experience may supply—the true assurance of things hoped for, though as yet only imperfectly seen, and still more imperfectly realized.

Faith, and its stages.

Faith therefore and its genesis must hold a foremost place in every well-constructed system of Christian doctrine, and may rightly claim a separate and special consideration prior to any enunciation of the doctrines to which it is to be directed. It is involved in the opening words of Christian

Creeds, and in any carefully arranged body of *credenda* should be fully defined, and, as far as possible, traced through its various stages and gradations, until we arrive at some conception of that *fides divina*, that inward assurance and even certainty that we are verily known of God, which is the most blessed gift that God the Holy Ghost can vouchsafe to us in our earthly pilgrimage. Much as we may differ from the general teaching and conclusions of Schleiermacher, it is right always to remember that modern theology owes much to him for calling especial attention to the prerogative position which the doctrine of Faith ought ever to hold in any true setting forth of Christian doctrine.

It must be admitted, however, that in our current theology we have still very imperfect guidance in reference to the genesis and development of Faith, and that modern writers of discernment and penetration have very plainly deplored it. In larger works, such as Dorner's *System of Christian Doctrine*, the student will find the difficult subject treated with the greatest fulness and elaboration. But for the general reader the treatment is too elaborate; and the steps from the lower stages of Faith to the higher are not traced with the lucidity and

simplicity which, as it seems to me, is especially necessary in a subject of such personal and practical importance. Could any subject be named more practically important than that of the pathway of the soul from the *fides historica*, through doubt and deliberation, to the final certitude of salvation and to that *fides divina* of which I have just spoken above? When we have reached that blessed goal, when the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are verily sons of God, and joint heirs with Christ, then all is light and blessedness. We know that it is the Comforter that has imparted to us this conviction, and we know too that, as it comes from Him, it is infallible [1].

[1] Mention also must certainly be made of the important and really exhaustive work of Dr. Frank of Erlangen, a *System of the Christian Certainty*, translated in the new series of Clark's Theological Library (Edinb. 1886). Of the first edition of this elaborate work Dr. Dorner speaks in high terms in his *System of Christian Doctrine*, § 3. 3, vol. i. p. 52. The main object of the writer is to set forth, first the character of Certainty in general (Part i. § 1.), its accordance with, and diversity from, Christian Certainty (Part i. § 2.), and thence to maintain and illustrate the general principle that a moral experience, viz. that of regeneration and conversion, is the true underlying foundation of all Christian Certainty. When Mr. Balfour in his address on the Religion of Humanity said that a philosophy of belief generally (not of religious belief exclusively) had yet to be constructed (*Essays*, p. 311), he was probably not aware how far Dr. Frank had gone in the required direction.

On the details of this vital subject much more cannot now be said in a general survey of Christian doctrine like the present; but it will not be found unprofitable to have directed the attention of the student to the absolute necessity of making Faith and its development the introduction to the study of Christian doctrine. The careful thinker may work out much by tracing the growth of Faith and of its certitude, or, in other words, the advance from stage to stage of conviction in the procedures and experiences of his own soul. How came it that he now believes, as he is inwardly conscious that he does believe? In most cases he will find that his earliest difficulties began with his realizing fully and clearly that the *fides historica* on which he may have been implicitly resting must, by the very nature of the case, itself depend upon human testimony: in fact upon a *fides humana*, and that thus he has not yet risen from the lower level of probabilities, though, in many cases, they may confessedly be probabilities of the highest conceivable order. But on probabilities he will ultimately feel that, in such a vital matter as the truth of Christianity, it is not possible for him to rest. In probabilities, of however high an order they may be, there is always the shadowy presence of the

contrary. The historical proof, as it has been well said by Dr. Dorner, "always leaves an unvanquished residue of antagonistic probability, a *formidinem oppositi*[1]"—and will often be found to supply a fulcrum on which doubt can dangerously operate. The "What if it should not be true after all?" is often painfully suggested to the anxious and unsatisfied soul when it has only probabilities to rest upon. So advance must be made, and every effort put forth to reach a higher and more secure level of faith.

What however that level may be, and how it may be most successfully reached, are questions which cannot very easily be answered. To some, when doubts thus arise as to the sufficiency of the historic proof, and when probabilities on each side are felt to be approaching a state of seeming equipoise, the consentient faith of the community, or in other words of the Catholic Church, borne witness to by the continuous testimony of the long ages of faith, may seem to minister the needed reassurance. To others the sacramental system of the Church, of the formal establishment of which no doubt can be entertained, may seem to bear with it an evidential verification of the common faith, and of the early annals of Christianity which no cross-

[1] See *System of Christian Doctrine*, § 7[b], vol. i. p. 105 (Transl.).

questioning can invalidate. "As it is now, so was it then in that upper room, when the dear Lord blessed the bread and broke it," is a thought which has materially helped many an anxious and disquieted heart [1]. The unbroken continuity of the blessed and distinctive service silently reassures and verifies. To the great majority, however, the surest step towards the *fides divina* is the surrender of the soul to the contemplation of Christ. When the uniqueness of His most holy personality is not only recognized, but felt and realized; when His words verily become to us, not merely words which never man spake, but words of eternal life,—then all spiritual experience seems to show that the first step has been indisputably taken, and that the certitude that has been sought for is being, perhaps slowly, yet most surely vouchsafed. Let the surrender be heart-whole and complete, and it will ever be found not only that the first step has been taken, but that the soul is verily approaching the frontiers of the *fides divina*, and is beginning to realize that certainty of the love of God in Christ, which is the life and the breath of the New Creature.

[1] A tract by Sir William Muir bearing on this subject, and entitled *The Lord's Supper an abiding witness to the death of Christ*, will be found in that singularly helpful series, *Present Day Tracts*, published by the Religious Tract Society. The tract is No. 36.

It is maintained that we may yet ascend higher, and by the process of reflexion and of discursive thinking may pass from religious certainty to scientific certainty. It is of course perfectly reasonable thus to desire to show that this religious certainty does not rest ultimately on merely personal experience, but can even appeal to scientific demonstration: yet to many minds the full fragrance of the personal conviction of the ever-abiding love of God, as shown in the giving of His only-begotten Son, will seem, in part at least, to have evaporated in the dialectic. But these things may be estimated very differently by different minds. This, however, may certainly be deemed worthy of notice, that some of our best modern divines do not shrink from making their appeal even to this Caesar of popular thought [1].

Doctrine must be considered historically.

Thus far we have dwelt in outline upon that doctrine which must ever hold the first place in any well-arranged system of Christian dogmatics—Pisteology, as it is sometimes now called, or the doctrine of Faith. Having placed this doctrine on what would seem to be a sound

[1] See Dorner, *Christian Doctrine*, § 12, vol. i. p. 159 sqq. "On the essential difference between *religious* and *scientific* certainty," comp. pp. 72, 73.

foundation, and having defined what we mean by the "I believe" of our Creeds, we now pass onward, in a carefully considered order, to the different *credenda* which form the main affirmations and leading principles of the Christian faith. In doing so, however, we feel it necessary to say that though this cannot be done in an address like the present—which is not a treatise on doctrine, but on the best mode of studying it—this rule should ever be carefully observed, *not to study any doctrine without also taking into consideration its history.*

To the neglect of this principle we may rightly refer well-nigh half of the errors and mispersuasions that have clung to dogmatic theology, and, not improbably, the whole of that aversion to the patient study of Christian doctrine which is certainly one of the most marked characteristics of the present time. And yet there has never been less excuse for this neglect. There has probably been no period in the later history of the Church which has been more fruitful than the last half century in the production of treatises on the history of doctrines, many of which, such as that of Hagenbach and that of Shedd, have long been accessible to the English student of dogmatics. The subject too has now a fully recognized position. It no

longer forms a mere appendix to doctrine. In every properly-arranged system it precedes it, being really a subsidiary portion of ecclesiastical history, and forming the frontier between that subject and dogmatics [1]. At any rate, it is indispensable in the study of Christian doctrine. No true view can be obtained of the more important articles of our faith, and especially of those which relate to the person of our Lord, without some knowledge of their first emergence in definitely formulated words, and of the changes which successive controversies plainly helped to introduce. More particularly is it of importance thus to obtain a clear perception of doctrine in its simpler outlines and more purely Biblical form, as distinguished from the ecclesiastical form into which it may have subsequently expanded. The vital and the essential becomes thus more easily recognized on the one hand; and, on the other hand, the exact nature of the deviations from it more correctly appreciated. Without the accompaniment of history, Church doctrine can never be either intelligently or impartially studied.

This distinction between doctrine in its Biblical and its ecclesiastical form is commonly

[1] See Hagenbach, *History of Doctrines*, § 2, vol. i. p. 5 (Transl.), Edinb. 1880.

set forth in detail in our best modern treatises on doctrine; but it is only by the help of a good special history of the times and circumstances that the true necessity of the additions and expansions, especially in reference to fundamental doctrine, can be fully and fairly estimated.

Bearing these preliminaries well in mind, we may now proceed to sketch out the order and arrangement under which experience seems to show that the whole body of our *credenda* may most profitably be studied. This order and arrangement is a matter of the greatest possible importance. Not only must we give the first place to those doctrines that at once proclaim themselves to be of a primary and fundamental nature, but, in the subsequent enumeration of the more special and derivative doctrines, we must so arrange them that each doctrine may, as far as it is possible to make the arrangement, be seen in its due relation to the primary doctrine from which it flows, and to those other derivative doctrines with which it is most closely allied. There is found to be and felt to be a coherence and interdependence in Christian doctrine, which not only makes the study of it more easy and more attractive, but has even something of an evidential character, something that suggests that a system so

naturally as well as logically coherent has, from this very fact, a claim on our acceptance which cannot lightly be set aside.

We begin then by considering what we must regard in their broadest outlines as foundation doctrines. We have already spoken of Faith, which is so far a foundation doctrine that without it Christian doctrine could have for us no intelligible meaning. We will now specify the primary *credenda* to which Faith is to be directed, and these must surely be—first God, and then Man, including under each such doctrines and teaching as immediately flow from them. Primary doctrines.

To these two subjects (necessarily only in simplest outline), and the best mode of studying them, I purpose devoting the remainder of the present address. The address that will follow will have as its substance all that is involved in the blessed conception of communion with God, or, in other words, all those varied and derivative doctrines which flow from the communion, and make up the remaining elements of the Christian Faith.

We begin then with some comments on the doctrine of God. The primacy of this most holy doctrine is recognized by all, but the manner in which it is presented to Doctrine of God.

the student will often be found to be obscured, even by writers of a very high strain, through the supposed necessity of preparing for the great doctrine by preliminary comments on Religion, Revelation, Holy Scripture, and even the Christian Church,—all of them subjects which really belong to later places in the true order of Christian development, and do not appear in any way to help the student to understand more clearly, or to grasp more firmly, the great truths connected with the profound and difficult subject of the existence and attributes of God.

We thus approach the subject directly, and prepare reverently to consider the three primary and interdependent conceptions, the being of God, the nature or essence of God, and the attributes of God. To a certain degree, but only to a certain degree, can these conceptions be treated separately, as each conception really implies a recognition of the other two. It will be found, however, to conduce to clearness if we notice these conceptions separately, and now chiefly confine our thoughts to the one that is of the greatest practical importance—the being or existence of God, and to those leading arguments by which the attempt has been made to prove that God verily *is*, and that the consciousness of the existence of God, which is alleged to be found in all

spirits, is a true consciousness, and corresponds to a blessed and eternal reality.

Existence of God.

The five arguments for the existence of God that have been generally deemed to be of the greatest solidity are as follows. First, that the all-perfect Being of whom we can form a clear conception must, by the very fact that we can form such a conception, have a real existence. Secondly, that while everything is contingent and transitory there must be something that ever is, and ever abides. Thirdly, that the chain of causes and effects, which we can trace in all things around us, almost of necessity involves the conception of a First Cause. Fourthly, that the existence in the world of—to say the very least—much that appears to be conformable to an end, and much that calls out in us the recognition of the highest manifestations of harmony and beauty, does by a steady process of reasoning lead us to an Absolute Being, and ultimately even to a personal God. Fifthly, that every pure moral conception leads us similarly to One in whom all moral perfection is concentrated. If we select only these five, and even admit that each may seem to fall short in some particular of conclusive demonstration, it can hardly be denied that the combined effect on any fair mind will commonly be felt to be

all but irresistible. Owing, however, to the different constitution of our minds, one or other of these arguments will often seem to one mind much more convincing than it may seem to another. If this be so, it is to that particular argument and to its development that the individual student will be wise more particularly to direct his attention [1].

Nature of God.

In passing to the next conception, the Essential Nature of God, though the subject-matter will be found to transcend all definition, still the conception should not be neglected, as it will be found to be helpful in its connexion with the third conception—the attributes of God, as suggesting the idea of the eternal home, so to speak, of each attribute, from which, as from a centre of light unapproachable, it rays forth, and becomes cognizable to the meditative spirit.

Attributes.

In reference to the third conception, the attributes of God, it may be observed that the whole subject is still in some degree of confusion. If, however, the old dis-

[1] For the development of some of the arguments here specified I may refer the student to a preceding Charge on this subject, viz. *Six Addresses on the Being of God*, published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Lond. 1880. Brief but important comments on the nature of these

tinction between the attributes which express the relation of God to Himself and the attributes which express His relation to all that exists through Him, be generally maintained, the difficulties connected with the subject will in some degree be alleviated.

God triune.

But we cannot rest here. As our idea of God must be the Christian idea, the student must pass onward to the fuller light in reference to the whole nature of God which is alone supplied by Christianity. And what Christianity teaches us is this—that the blessed and transcendent Being on whom we have been meditating is triune, and that there are eternal distinctions in the depths of Deity which, through the teaching of God's most Holy Word, have been brought home to the spirit and soul of believing man. The doctrine of the holy, blessed, and adorable Trinity has now come fully into sight.

On that most holy and, as may most truly be added, most practical doctrine, all that I can venture to say in a survey like the present is this, that in all meditations on this profound subject the student must clearly recognize that he has

proofs will be found in Lotze, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 8 sqq. (Translated by G. T. Ladd), Boston, U. S. A., 1886.

now passed from the undeveloped and pre-Christian idea of Him "in whom we live, and move, and have our being[1]," to that of Him who now dwells in us, and reveals Himself to us, not as the solitary transcendent One, but as the One, in the unity of whose divine Essence three eternal and co-equal Persons or Personalities eternally co-exist.

To this general statement we may add three comments.

Three necessary comments.

First, it must ever be remembered that in the application of the term Persons to the eternally immanent distinctions in the Divine Essence, we are using utterly inadequate, and even ambiguous language—the term Person, owing to its ordinary use, commonly indicating a separate ego, and so opening an apparent avenue towards tritheism. If, however, we here understand by it that which it was ever intended to imply—a distinctive mode of being in the one Godhead, we shall be in harmony with the teaching of the great Catholic writers both of the East and of the West.

Secondly, it must also clearly be borne in mind that, owing to the limitations of our nature, there

[1] Acts xvii. 28.

is often in devout persons an unconscious tendency to tritheism, and that this can only be successfully resisted by ever bearing in mind the vital words of the Creed, "not dividing the substance." So to divide or separate the Divine Essence that each blessed Personality might be supposed to have an equal share of it would involve the obliteration of the self-conscious personal unity. It would in fact be found to introduce tritheism in such a definite form that few minds of ordinary strain would ever be able, save by God's special grace, to find their way back again to Catholic truth. And this, be it observed, is no mere speculative error. It is an error of a seriously practical nature that will be found vitally to affect the very ground-principles of a religious life.

The third comment which it is necessary to make is in reference to attempts to frame what has been called a synthesis of the divine Triunity—or, in other words, attempts to establish the truth of the doctrine by analogies, whether logical, physical, or psychological. All of them will be found to fail in some vital particular, and so alike to exhibit in an erroneous form the very doctrine which they are seeking to illustrate. Even the famous synthesis connected with love will not bear the test of rigid examin-

ation [1]. Nor can the illustration from the human consciousness, viz. thinking of oneself as an object, and then realizing that subject and object are identical, be ever anything more than suggestive [2]. In this profound subject I am confident that it will be best for the student not to commit himself to any so-called proofs of the doctrine. What is best is to strive to understand the statement of the doctrine as set forth in Catholic formularies, and then earnestly to pray for that illuminating conviction which is the special gift of the Spirit, and is never withheld from those who in patience and humility crave for it.

Creation.

When we have thus to some extent learnt what God is, our thoughts at once carry us onward to Man, what he was, and what he is, and what, under the dis-

[1] This well-known illustration ("amare, amari, redamare") has been adopted by many divines ancient and modern. It has however been shown convincingly to be seriously deficient, especially in reference to the third blessed Personality: see Dorner, *Christian Doctrine*, § 30[b], 4, vol. i. p. 408 sq (Transl.).

[2] This analogy, or, rather, illustration is noticed by Rothe in his *Dogmatik*, § 15, Part i. p. 59, Heidelb. 1870. It may just serve to remind us that in our own human consciousness there may be mysteries, which, seriously contemplated, may lead us to receive with the humility of an unquestioning faith these blessed truths which we are now considering, and which, be it ever remembered, are rooted and grounded in God's most holy Word.

pensation of the Spirit, he is to be here and hereafter. But Creation and the preparation for Man must first claim our attention. With the doctrine of the triune God still occupying the foreground of our thoughts, the doctrine of Creation, or of God's manifestation of Himself in a cosmical form, follows in due and orderly sequence.

In the shorter and in the longer form of our Creed creation is ascribed to the Father, but this is manifestly not to be understood as ascribed in any seclusive sense. The Father is named as having eternal priority in order, and as being, to use the language of the Early Church, "the root and fountain of Deity[1]." Using then the more inclusive term, we begin with the vital question,—Why did God create the world? what was the *vera causa* of His having called into existence out of non-existence the totality of created things? The answer of all deeper thinkers, whether in the Early Church or in our own times, has ever been the same—that it was from love, spontaneous and exhaustless

[1] See Pearson, *Exposition of the Creed*, notes to Art. I, vol. ii. pp. 49, 50 (ed. Burton). Among other authorities Bishop Pearson quotes *Concil. Tolet.* II, "Fons ergo ipse et origo est totius divinitatis." These words I have been unable to verify, but I find in the sixth Council, can. I (Bruns) the following, "patrem ingenitum, increatum fontem et originem totius divinitatis."

love, in union with omniscient wisdom [1]. This answer, however, must be accepted in the clear and broad meaning of the words, and as in tacit protest against the unworthy, and, as it seems to me, unconsciously impious conceptions, that either yearning want in reference to self-consciousness, or the over-fulness of a divine life, was really the moving cause that called out the world and the rational beings that were hereafter to occupy it.

This question being answered, the whole subject of Creation (with Preservation and Providence) will be before us for consideration. In approaching the subject the student must be especially on his guard against being entangled in theories of development, as frequently formulated by modern speculation. Development there may well be, for the Biblical history of Creation distinctly discloses it [2], but not development in some of the forms that are now frequently pressed upon us as the only true modes of accounting for the present constitution of things. All such forms may readily be recog-

[1] The student who may desire reverently to enter into these deep mysteries will find good and careful guidance in Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, § 33, vol. ii. pp. 1–26 (Transl.).

[2] Consider Gen. i. 20, 24; and see *Destiny of the Creature*, Serm. iii. Note F, an ante-Darwinian note.

nized, as they all alike point to, and lead to, a scarcely veiled Determinism. With Determinism, or with anything that may ultimately lead to it, the Christian student can hold no parley. He can never with spiritual safety swerve from the principle that, to use the words of Lotze, "the world, with respect to its existence as well as its content, is completely dependent upon the will of God [1]," and that "the will of God is without further procedure the realization of that which He wills [2]." Every conception, in any form, of any development that is not in harmony with these principles can end only in conclusions which are either absolutely inconsistent with the nature of God, or with the freedom of the human will. God is indeed eternally productive life, but, again to use the words of Lotze, "the will to create is an absolutely eternal predicate of God [3]."

In reference to the preservation or the conservation of all things, care again must be taken to reject all theories which imply any self-sufficiency on the part of Nature to maintain itself for a single moment by its own agency. The same creative power that called it into

[1] *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*, § 47, p. 79 (Boston, U.S.A., 1886).

[2] *Ib.* § 45, p. 77. [3] *Ib.* § 44, p. 74.

existence is that which maintains it and preserves it each moment as it passes.

Providence and Miracles.

The connected subject of Providence will necessarily include the difficult subject of miracles. In reference however to these and to all forms and manifestations that are popularly spoken of as contrary to the order of nature, the student will rarely find any difficulty that can, in any sense, be considered insuperable, if he keeps steadily in view the principle, that if God governs the world as well as preserves it, the conception of such government must imply God's direct influence on the order of nature whenever that order of nature might not of itself include the required issues and consequences. The miracle, thus considered, does not imply a violation of the laws of nature, but is rather a result from changes in the inner condition of forces and things, by which they pass under the domain of another law than that under which they were before the change was brought about[1]. The effects thus become no

[1] Bishop Martensen, perhaps a little precipitately, speaks of the miracle, properly speaking, as implying "a violation of the laws of nature" (*Christian Dogmatics*, § 117, p. 221, Transl.). The view of Lotze (*Outlines of Philosophy of Religion*, § 62, p. 107 sq.), which is substantially the same with that adopted in the text, is surely more reasonable and satisfactory.

longer ordinary, but extra-ordinary, yet distinctly subject to law; the change not being in the laws of nature, but in the inner condition of the things to which the required influences were imparted.

The agents by which these changes are brought about we may well believe—as very many passages in Scripture warrant our believing—to be, in numerous instances, spiritual beings, the direct agents of Him "who maketh His angels winds, and His ministers a flame of fire [1]."

Doctrine of Angels.

From the created world of Nature we pass to the created world of sentient beings, and pre-eminently to that of angels and men, the visible and invisible beings called into existence by the creative love and power of Almighty God. Of the two doctrines, the doctrine of Man takes the precedence, in most systems, of the doctrine of Angels, but, as it would seem, to the detriment of the natural order of thought. It is plainly the teaching of Scripture that the creation of angels was anterior to that of man; and if, in such a subject, tradition may be appealed to, it would seem that it was a prevailing belief in the Early Church that man was created owing to

[1] Heb. i. 7 (Revised Version).

the ruinous fall in the angel world[1]. The history of sin plainly runs up to a period distinctly anterior to the fall of man, and casts some side-lights on the nature of temptation, and the ever-existing antagonism between the angels who had lost their first estate and the subsequently created race of mankind. It may be added, too, that the subordinate position that has been assigned to the doctrine of angels has led to increasing doubts as to the reality of their existence, and to the present tendency to regard them as belonging to the poetry of religion, or, as even Bishop Martensen seems disposed to regard them, as belonging to the realm of ideas[2], and as hovering between personality and personification.

It is thus for every reason desirable that the attention of the student should be directed to the suggestive, monitory, and we may also add, consolatory doctrine of the angels. There is good material and impressive teaching to be found on this subject in many standard works on dogmatics, and nowhere more instructively and attractively than in the two well-known sermons of Bishop Bull.

[1] See, for example, Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Book xxii. ch. 1, *Enchiridion*, ch. 62.

[2] *Christian Dogmatics*, § 68, p. 128 (Transl.).

The doctrine of Man then follows in its proper order, and with it the numerous subjects that are, more or less closely, connected with it. Of these there are certainly two which, in every properly arranged system of Christian doctrine, hold a well-defined and prominent place.

Doctrine of Man.

First, the special and distinct nature of the creation of man as contrasted with that of the other living creatures that came into being through the operation of God. Man, it is especially stated, was created in the image of God. Not only did God specially form man, but, as Holy Scripture further specifies, imparted to him life directly from Himself; He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Words cannot be more distinct, or more utterly irreconcilable with current theories as to the origin and descent of man. Evolution has its proper place in the history of the genesis of the world and of the things that are therein; nay, it may appeal to Holy Scripture itself for recognition. But unless we are prepared to set aside unusually clear and direct statements which we find in the early pages of the Bible, we are fully justified in firmly maintaining that evolution had nothing to do with the genesis of man, and that

in this respect the line of demarcation between man and the creatures around him is indisputable and ineffaceable[1].

Reality of the Fall.

The second subject on which it is absolutely necessary for the student most earnestly to dwell is the historical reality of the Fall[2]. Without such a reality all that follows in the sacred history of the world is simply inexplicable. Redemption and the Atonement lose all meaning, and a large portion of the teaching of the New Testament becomes unintelligible. There is no Biblical truth of more momentous import, or of a more practical and verifiable nature, than the doctrine of the fall of man from his primal innocence through temptation. It is a fact in the history of mankind represented to us under symbolism so suggestive and so significant that, even if any hesitation should be felt in accepting the literal form of the narrative, no really open mind can rightly feel any hesitation in recognizing the historical truth of that which the symbolism represents, viz. that man was seduced by a temptation from without to disobey a clearly

[1] I may here refer to a preceding Charge, *Are we to modify Fundamental Doctrine*, Address ii. p. 14 sqq., esp. p. 20 (S. P. C. K.).

[2] On this really vital question, see the above-mentioned Charge, Address iii. p. 27 sqq.

revealed command, and that by disobeying he did really come to a knowledge of evil by actual experience, and by having realized in his own consciousness its frightful actuality, and the hitherto unknown antithesis between good and evil. It is also a fact equally certain that the act of disobedience involved consequences, alike immediate and far-reaching—consequences not simply affecting the sinful pair but, by the law of heredity, all who were descended from them, and even, beyond this, the very realm of nature, of which man in a certain sense is the flower and the representative.

These consequences may be summed up under the three interdependent forms of sinfulness, fruitlessness,—or, as it is spoken of in Scripture, subjection to vanity[1],—and death; the first of these referring more particularly to man, the second and third to the whole realm of animate and inanimate nature.

Sinfulness.

In considering the first of these three consequences, the guiding thought is to regard human sinfulness as, in its true genesis, the state resulting from the primeval act, and as subsequently receiving development and augmentation each time that the sinful determination of will, manifested in the disobedience

[1] Rom. viii. 20.

of the first man, is reproduced in the descendant. The primeval act involved not only a disturbance of the whole relation of man to his Maker, but of the whole character of human existence, so that, as Martensen rightly observes, each one is by his nature that which Adam made himself by his act[1]. Each comes thus into the world in an abnormal relation to God, and with an inherent tendency to augment by sinful acts the ever-widening aggregate of sinfulness. And so as generation follows generation the *massa peccati* becomes felt to be more appalling in its magnitude, and the conception of the exceeding sinfulness of sin more and more realizable to every meditative soul. All such estimates and meditations, however, flow from the idea of a Fall. Blot out that idea, and no alternative is left but to regard sin as either something eternally ingrained in all existence, or as something utterly addititious and transitory, a fungus on the stem of human nature which culture may remove, and may even ultimately eradicate. But sin is neither eternal on the one hand, nor thus eradicable on the other. It had a beginning, and it will have an end; but that end will be no evanescence or eradication on this side the grave, but the break-up of exhausted

[1] *Christian Dogmatics*, § 93, p. 174 (Transl.).

impotence in the environment of the second death

The second consequence, which we have termed fruitlessness, is no less real, though less patent and appreciable[1]. And yet every sober mind must admit, hard as it may be to trace the causal connexion between spiritual lapse and material manifestations and change, that all that we behold around us does seem to press upon us the conviction that the primal declaration, that the ground was cursed owing to the disobedience of man, has received, and is receiving, its fulfilment. It is, I well know, the tendency of the present time peremptorily to set aside all such views of nature as unreal and fanciful, and yet when we ask ourselves the single question, "If man and the world have the close connexion which even the most barren scepticism cannot attempt to deny, is it not at least thinkable that a change in the whole status of the one would involve some elements of change in the other?"—when we ask this question, is it enough to answer it with a simple negative? When we find that such a thought can appeal not only to phenomena in nature which do seem to point to

Subjection to Vanity.

[1] This subject is considered at length in *Destiny of the Creature*, Serm. i.

frustrations in nature's true development, but also to a distinct apostolic utterance on the subject, can it be unreasonable, from a Christian point of view, steadily to maintain the principle that sin *has* cast its shadow on the natural world, and that it is conducive to practical religion not only to maintain such a belief, but, as far as may be possible, to act upon it?

Of this, at any rate, I am confident, that the man who walks through the world with this conception in his soul will be more gracious and merciful in his contact with things around him, and will lead a far higher, nobler, and more chivalrous life, than he who disowns any such conception, and simply uses or abuses nature, be it animate or inanimate, for the mere purpose of satisfying selfish desires, or indulging the cravings of an unrestrained cupidity. The subjection of the creature to vanity is a consequence of sin which ought to hold a place in every system of scriptural and meditative theology.

Death.

In reference to the third consequence of sin and the entry of death into the race to which we belong, one broad and clear truth must ever be recognized,—that no safe inference can be drawn from the inward structure of man, as he now is, to what that structure actually was when he came fresh from the hands

of his Creator. Though we may properly admit that, in regard of his bodily frame, man even in his first state belonged to the realm of nature, we must never forget that by the inbreathed spirit of God he was endued with an ever-vivifying principle which, if natural body and inbreathed spirit had remained in the perfectness of their primal union, would have placed death permanently in abeyance. Even in this life we see sufficient traces of the energy of the spirit in the maintenance of earthly life to feel the complete reasonableness of the belief that if man had not, by his sin, disturbed the original harmony of his nature, the spirit would have ever obviated any tendency in the body to physical death, and the passage to higher stages of existence would have been along an ever-brightening pathway of life, and not through the shadows of dissolution and death.

Conclusion.

And here we pause. We have now completed our survey of what may be considered as naturally the first portion of Christian doctrine. The three great subjects that have occupied our thoughts have been the doctrine of that without which no doctrinal system can ever be developed — Christian Faith. Resting upon it we have endeavoured to obtain some view of the

blessed doctrine of God; and we have closed with the consideration of the doctrine of Man, unfallen and fallen, and of the subjects that are in theological connexion with it.

We now proceed in natural order to the second and remaining portion of Christian doctrine—the communion of God and Man, and the whole procedure of that boundless mercy which has sealed to us the possibility of the recovery of far more than a lost image or the state of a primal blessedness. Yea, verily far more—even the right to be called the children of God, and to dwell in the House of our Father for evermore.

The stages and various developments of that communion will form the subject of the next and concluding address.

ADDRESS V.

Study of Christian Doctrine.

PART II.

We now pass to the second of the two divisions which may be conveniently recognized in Christian doctrine, and to some considerations of the best mode of studying it. In the last address we considered that portion of the subject which may be regarded as the more abstract, and more purely theological, viz. the portion which includes the nature of Faith, the doctrine of God, of Creation, of Angels, and of Man, both in his innocence and his fall. In the present address we take up the consideration of what may be regarded as the more practical portion of the subject,—namely those various forms of doctrine which set forth God and Man no longer under their separate aspects, but, through the boundless mercy of God, as in union and communion—in a word, all that may be included in the comprehensive term of Religion.

Religion; derivation and meaning.

Into the many meanings that have been assigned to this much-discussed word, our present limits will not permit us to enter. Its very derivation and primary meaning is somewhat doubtful; its constituents diversely stated; what is generally to be understood by it a matter of controversy. Still, as we are now about to deal with all that it implies, and as the word itself will necessarily occur from time to time in this present address, it may be convenient here to state at the outset that, as regards its primary meaning and derivation[1], we seem etymologically constrained to consider it as "re-choosing" rather than "re-connecting" —convenient as this latter view might be in

[1] The two most probable derivations of the word "religio" are, (1) that of Cicero (*de Nat. Deorum*, ii. 28), who derives it from "relegere" in the sense of "diligenter retractare," comparing "elegans," "diligens," and "intelligens"; (2) that Lactantius (*Inst. Div.* iv. 28), who opposes the derivation of Cicero, and connects the word with "religare" in the sense of our being "vinculo pietatis obstricti Deo et religati." The Latin Fathers mostly adopted (2); modern writers are somewhat divided, but the preponderance seems clearly in favour of (1), the line, "religentem esse oportet, religiosum nefas," cited by an old and learned grammarian mentioned by Aulus Gellius (*Noct. Att.* iv. 9), seeming to go far to settle the question. The student who is desirous of pursuing this subject will find it very fully discussed in Voigt, *Fundamentaldogmatik*, § 2, pp. 9–30 (Gotha, 1874).

illustrating the general meaning that seems commonly assigned to the term. That general meaning, if we follow the usage of the best and most accurate theological writers, would seem to be "Man's consciousness of his communion with God[1]." We may further consider Faith to be its fundamental activity; and if we attempt to specify its constituents, we may, with all the most careful writers on this subject[2], regard full and true knowledge, deepest reverence in thought and feeling, and an ever-ready Godward will, as pre-eminently integral portions of that which is included in the complex term of Religion. Knowing, feeling, and willing are all combined in the full meaning of this significant word.

Possibility of communion.

But leaving now the word, and directing our thoughts more particularly to that union and communion between God and Man, and perhaps also between man and man, which the word seems cer-

[1] The definition is that of Bishop Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, § 4, p. 5 (Transl.). The definition of Dr. Dorner is to the same effect, viz. "the coalescence of the act of communication [on the part of God] and of reception [on the part of man] realized in actual life" (*Christian Doctrine*, § 46, vol. ii. p. 106), but is less simple.

[2] See especially Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, § 46, 47, vol. ii. p. 106 sqq., where the subject of religion and of

tainly to adumbrate[1], we find ourselves face to face with the preliminary but most momentous question, — Is such a communion between God and Man, in any true sense, conceivable? Is it not clear that all our foregoing considerations have made us feel, directly or indirectly, not only the transcendence but the holiness of God? Is it not also clear that they have led us, to some extent, to realize the moral ruin that is involved in the Fall? Now when we combine these considerations, and dwell, on the one hand, on the holiness of God and all its eternal purity and perfection, and, on the other hand, dwell on this fall of man from a first estate in all its aspects of disobedience and degradation, does not the conception of any communion between a holy and eternal God and a ruined race of mortal men, evoke questions that carry us far beyond any realm of merely metaphysical difficulties, and put us face to face with morality itself? Can such a communion be consistent with the idea of an all-holy God?

To this momentous question there are two

its characteristics will be found very fully and very carefully discussed.

[1] See Lotze, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*, § 85, p. 144 (Boston, U. S. A., 1886).

forms of answer which more particularly require our attention. The answer in each case is affirmative, but the principles on which the answer is based are fundamentally different. The one is the answer of modern thought, which bases itself on what it deems to be the exaggerated conception of the true nature of evil and sin. Evil it regards to be something that is involved in the very idea of the history of the world, something that emerges in that development through conflict, which is assumed to be the essential characteristic of all true and realizable progress. The answer then is, that if the conception of a fall is to be admitted, that fall can only be regarded as an incident which is due to the existing constitution of things, and can of itself suggest no difficulty in the continuance of communion between the Creator and the beings whom His love had called into existence. But such an answer, it is plain, strikes at the very root of the true conception of sin. The turning away from the Creator to the creature, which may properly be regarded as the essential nature of sin [1], loses all its moral aspects, and is, it may be,

[1] On the essential nature of Sin, see a preceding Charge, entitled *Salutary Doctrine*, Address iii. p. 54 sqq. (S.P.C.K.)

a misfortune, but still only such a misfortune as is necessarily involved in the onward movement of all things. If, however, as is now more commonly the case, a fall of man through a definite act of disobedience is denied to have had any real existence, the question we are now considering, which assumes the truth of the Fall, can obviously never arise.

The second form of answer is of a widely different nature. It assumes the truth of the Fall; it seeks not to minimize the nature of sin; it realizes its dreadful power; and recognizes that, though God is love, sin must have impeded the outflow of that love, and must have affected the nature of the communion between the all-holy God and lapsed and disobedient man. The expulsion from Paradise and the flaming sword of the Cherubim are the symbols of altered relations in the communion; but the love that called man into being, and the justice that takes note of the circumstances of the temptation, yea, and the blessed promise that was given even before the sentence was passed, all minister to the soul the unchanging assurance that though the nature of the communion may have undergone change, the fact that the communion itself exists, and, it may be too, under more pitying and spirit-moving rela-

tions, is an eternal truth, a sure and unfailing anchor on which the soul may rest in confidence for ever. If the primal promise has received its plenary fulfilment in the mystery of Immanuel, of God with us—if the eternal Son could himself declare that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life[1]," who could doubt the reality of this closeness of the existing communion between God and the children of his hand? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things[2]?"

Without this consciousness of communion with God religion cannot exist. True communion involves feeling, knowing, and willing, and in Religion, as we have already said, all deeper thinkers seem now to be convinced that these three elements must be included. There must be full knowledge, there must be the deepest feeling of reverence, and the ready God-ward will. When these are coexistent, we have Religion and the consciousness of that communion with God which we must now proceed to set forth in its varied forms and manifestations.

[1] John iii. 16. [2] Rom. viii. 52.

Connexion of doctrines.

These forms and manifestations make up the body of dogmatic theology; and when traced out in orderly sequence suggest those arrangements and groupings of doctrine which experience seems to show are indispensable for the obtaining of any clear and connected view of Christian dogmatics. Most of our current treatises, and especially those which are based on the Thirty-nine Articles and the arrangement of subjects adopted in those Articles, fail in presenting to the student the sequence of doctrine in its natural order and connexion. The leading doctrines of our faith appear rather as so many separate subjects, than, as they really are, portions of an organically connected whole, and the results of a natural and intelligible development.

This development will be best realized if we specify what would seem to be the successive stages of the nature of the communion of God with man, and then mention, in association with each stage, the doctrines that stand in connexion with it. A kind of natural order will thus be preserved, and the evolution of doctrine more readily recognized in its general outlines.

Adopting this principle, we seem to have four stages in the communion of God with man

sufficiently distinct from one another to admit of our apportioning to each one the doctrines which more particularly belong to it and characterize it.

1. Of the four stages, the first obviously is the communion which existed between God and man in the time of man's innocence. Our knowledge, however, of the nature of that communion is far too limited to warrant us stating anything as being *de fide*, in connexion with this period of blessedness, beyond what has been already stated in reference to the nature of man, except it be this—that we must believe that man came into being endued with what is termed Original Righteousness. This Original Righteousness we may rightly consider, with Bishop Bull, to involve much more than a mere state of innocence and unconscious rectitude[1]. The image of God in which our first parents were called into being, the man directly, the woman derivatively, cannot possibly be understood as implying less than this—that they were endowed with divinely imparted gifts, graces, and powers, alike intellectual and spiritual, and that thus endued they were permitted

Communion before the Fall.

[1] *State of Man before the Fall*, Disc. v. (*Works*, vol. ii. p. 121, Oxf. 1827).

to have communion with God in a direct form, and to enjoy the blessed privilege of what has been termed by St. Basil a nearness and assession of God[1], that made life to them life indeed.

This doctrine of the original righteousness of man is of great importance, and should form the subject of careful study, not only as enabling us to form a clearer conception of man's primal state, but as helping us to some extent to understand the mysteries of the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. All that the first Adam had in his innocence, all his intuitions, and fountains of inward knowledge, of which, as it would seem, the Creator of all things vouchsafed, in some particulars, to make use—all were inherent in the pure humanity of the second Adam, and must never be lost sight of when we enter into the difficult questions of our Lord's knowledge as man, or of that advance in wisdom which the inspired evangelist ascribes to the child Jesus as distinctly as he ascribes to Him advance in stature and development in bodily form[2].

[1] *προσεδρεία τοῦ Θεοῦ, Quod Deus non est Auctor malorum,* cap. 6, vol. ii. p. 78 (Paris, 1722). Many similar passages from early writers will be found in the Discourse alluded to in the foregoing note.

[2] See *Christus Comprobator,* p. 99 sq. (S. P. C. K.)

In all these questions what we must firmly maintain is this—that contemporaneously with His bodily development, our blessed Lord had in their duly corresponding measure and proportions all those spiritual graces, powers, and perfectibilities which were the inalienable attributes of the pure and sinless humanity that He vouchsafed to assume. To draw inferences from our nature as we now experimentally know it, and to apply them to the circumstances of our Lord's human nature, is to fall into errors and confusions which, in the sequel, must seriously vitiate a true and saving belief in the vital and fundamental doctrine of the Incarnation [1].

Nature of the Fall.

We now pass onward. This first and most blessed stage of God's communion with man comes to its close with the fall of the first parents of the whole human family. To this distinctly historical and ruinously far-reaching event we have already had occasion to refer; but it is here that it should be more particularly considered in all the significant details which are specified in the Word of God. While, on the one hand, we press no bald literalism, and are willing to recognize that historical facts seem certainly presented

[1] *Christus Comprobator*, p. 95 sq.

to us in a more or less allegorical form, we are bound, on the other hand, closely to consider every verse, and, in the construction of this doctrine, to leave no point unnoted in the marvellous delineation of the primeval history. The points especially to be dwelt upon are, (1) that man fell, not, as we must suppose angels fell, by the inworkings of a proud [1], and subsequently defiant subjectivity, but by direct *temptation* from without; (2) that the woman as the weaker one fell first, and that the man, persuaded by—as he fails not to specify—his God-given wife, shared in the same act of wilful disobedience to a divine command. Direct disobedience, stimulated by temptation, and fostered by pride of heart [2], was the first human sin, and the true *fons et origo* of all its subsequent developments. The two remaining points are, (3) the merciful immediateness of the Promise, made, it should be observed, neither to the man nor to the woman, but uttered prophetically in the sentence on the Tempter [3]; and (4) the fact, often insufficiently recognized, that the deed done by the Tempter called forth a chastisement—degradation and the "eating of dust"—which,

[1] Comp. 1 Tim. iii. 6, and notes *in loc.*

[2] Comp. Genesis iii. 6. [3] Genesis iii. 14,

if we identify, as Scripture plainly indicates[1], the Serpent with the Devil, must be regarded as an enhancement of the punishment already inflicted on the apostate archangel in the culminating circumstances of his rebellion and ruinous fall[2].

The true Doctrine of Sin.

These considerations will be found to be of no little importance in the attempt to set forth a true doctrine of Sin; the present being obviously the natural place for the attempt to be made. The Fall brings with it the entry of Sin into the world, and it is precisely here that its essential nature, propagation, and consequences should receive full investigation and consideration. Until sin is fully realized in its true essence and characteristics, and seen and felt to present all the lineaments of its first emergence in the first transgression, we can never profitably pass onward to the consideration of the holy mysteries of the Atonement and the saving efficacies of redeeming love. The student is therefore advised to give especial attention to these three things, (1) the nature of Temptation, as disclosed in the brief but significant account in Genesis, and profoundly illustrated in the temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) the

[1] Rev. xx. 2; see ch. xii. 2. [2] Rev. xii. 7, 8, 9.

essential nature of Sin, and what constitutes that which the Apostle terms its exceeding sinfulness [1]; (3) the principle of its transmission, and the apparent certainty of the fact that we must combine the two modes of explanation—the Traducian, that lays its stress on the unity of the race and the patent principle of heredity, and the Creationist, which refers the origination of all souls immediately and directly to God—to arrive at a true conception of the nature of the transmission of sin from our first parents to their progeny, and to each succeeding member of the whole human family; (4) the deep distinction between human sin, regarded as the result of temptation, and the sin of apostate angels and of him who is their head—a sin which we may correctly term demoniacal or diabolical, but into which the dreadful possibility ever remains that human sin may pass in its last and most appalling developments [2]. This distinction, which is of the greatest

[1] On this subject the student may refer to Address iii. in *Salutary Doctrine*, p. 54 sqq. (S.P. C. K.)

[2] Comp. Plitt, *Evangelische Glaubenslehre*, § 34, vol. i. p. 294 sq. (Gotha, 1863). This able writer in his comments on the Doctrine of Sin, draws attention to the distinction between human sin and the sin of devils, but, at the same time, points out the dreadful possibility of the former, passing ultimately into utter hatred of God, and so, practically, into the latter.

possible moment, is far too much overlooked in modern systems of theology. We too often are led to forget that in human sin some feeble elements of love may be permitted to linger[1]. In demoniacal or diabolical sin the only element is hate, and uttermost malignity.

From the Fall to the Incarnation.

2. We now pass to the second stage of God's communion with man, and to the principles and doctrines which are connected with it. This second stage may be considered to extend from the Fall to the Incarnation, and to include all the long ages of preparation for the manifestation of the silence-sealed mystery[2] of Immanuel, and of God's eternal love towards the children of men. The great doctrines which may be conveniently connected with this are, first and more particularly, the doctrine of Original or Birth-sin, and of the lost Freedom of the Will, both well set forth in our 9th and 10th Articles. For these, preparation will have been already made in the consideration of the Fall.

Heathenism and Judaism.

Two other subjects of deep interest must also here find a place in the evolution of our *credenda*: first, the long and varied history of Heathenism, and of the growth of the Wild Olive Tree;

[1] Comp. Luke vii. 47. [2] Rom. xvi. 25.

secondly, the mysteriously progressive development of spiritual Judaism and of Messianic hope. These two great movements each serve the one to illustrate the other. The history of God's chosen people assumes naturally the chief place in the ever-advancing preparations; yet in that mystic preparation even Heathenism is, to some extent, permitted to share. No thoughtful student can fail to recognize interpenetrating influences and slow yet ever onward movement towards the light. Human history becomes more and more instinct with purpose; and the rise and fall of mighty empires, and the emergence of highly developed civilizations, all bear their mysterious witness to the movements of the Spirit of God in the seeming chaos of pre-Christian history, and the teleologic aim that was ordering all things as the ages moved onward towards that "fulness of the time[1]" for which, under vague and varied forms, all the noblest spirits on earth, age after age, were dimly hoping and waiting.

The study of Judaism and Heathenism and their widely different, yet still common share in the *Præparatio Evangelica*, will be found to be full of the deepest interest, and to give a significance, in the case of Heathenism, to the

[1] Gal. iv. 4.

now strangely and rapidly accumulating records of the past. The more we read the more shall we seem to realize the deep truth that there were two preparations silently developing, the one clear and distinct through a chosen race, the other in the great heathen world—dim, partial, and fragmentary, yet, in a true sense, a preparation. It is true, as St. Paul said to the men of Lystra, that God, "in the generations gone by, suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways[1]," "yet," as the Apostle added, "He left not Himself without witness"; nay, as he said still more distinctly to the better cultivated audience in the Areopagus, the very seasons and the bounds of the habitation of every nation upon earth were all determined by God, that haply men "might feel after Him and find Him[2]," and, as he said in another place, might learn His being and power from the book of Nature that lay open around them[3].

God's teaching of the nations must ever form a part of a well-ordered system of theology.

In the study of Judaism one vital principle must never be overlooked, that, in the stage of God's communion with man which we are now considering, much of that communion was through the medium of prophets, and that this

[1] Acts xiv. 16. [2] Acts xvii. 26, 27. [3] Rom. i. 20.

is the natural place in our system for the consideration of the whole subject of Prophets and Prophecy.

Prophets and Prophecy.

Of late years the nature and position of the prophets of the Old Dispensation, their functions and their mission, has been set forth by several eminent writers with great clearness and persuasiveness. We see in them the true spiritual guides of the nation, men who brought more and more home to the heart of the people true conceptions of the God of their fathers, and revealed His counsel and will with vividness and power at every turning-point of the national history. God was indeed during this period speaking to the fathers by the prophets. All this has been set forth with distinct ability and success; but it cannot be said that it has fared equally well with the subject of prophecy. The very aspect in which modern thought presents to us the prophets of the Old Covenant as uniquely wise guides and counsellors, men of wisdom and foresight, and of zeal and patriotism, has tended to divert attention from those special gifts of the Holy Ghost[1] by means of which they were enabled to enhance their guidance by prophecy in the true and natural sense of the word,

[1] 2 Pet. i. 21.

by foretelling as well as forewarning, and especially by directing from time to time the hearts of the faithful to the hope of Israel[1] and the blessedness of the Messianic kingdom.

This highest function of the prophet has of late been dangerously obscured; sometimes plainly denied, sometimes explained away, sometimes partially admitted, yet with such reserve and limitations as to leave the impression on the mind that prophecy, in the strict sense of the word, ought to be regarded, if not actually doubtful, yet certainly as very rare and exceptional. The careful study of the subject of prophecy, and of its evidential value in the whole circumstances of God's communion with mankind, is thus especially needed at the present time, and must be distinctly included in every adequate effort to obtain a full and clear knowledge of the fundamentals of Christian doctrine.

3. We may now pass onward to the third stage of God's communion with man, and of the doctrines which are especially connected with the whole period—the period of this present dispensation—extending from the Incarnation to the future Second Coming of the Lord.

From the Incarnation to the Advent.

[1] Acts xxviii. 20.

The Incarnation.

The doctrine that now at once claims the student's most earnest and most reverent attention is the doctrine of the Incarnation. And here, at the very outset, two things must separately be considered—the truth of the fact, and the full and true meaning of all that the blessed fact involves in reference to the person and twofold nature of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus. It is obvious that the second of these two subjects is that with which we are here more particularly concerned. The first, viz. the truth of the fact, belongs more particularly to evidential theology, but here may rightly be alluded to, as the tendency of modern thought is—if not directly to deny the Incarnation—yet to regard it as in itself so inconceivable, that some difference of opinion may be tolerated as to what is to be understood by the term, and by the declaration of the earliest form of the Christian Creed, that Jesus Christ is the only Son of God [1]. Now in regard of this vague mode

[1] Such comments as those of so well known a writer as Prof. Harnack lately put before the English reader in the *Nineteenth Century* for July, p. 158 sqq., may warn us that something more than doubtfulness on this vital subject is creeping into modern theologies. What Schleiermacher spoke of as the "poetical announcement of St. Luke" (see Neander, *Life of Christ*, ch. 2. 2, p. 14, note, Bohn) is now spoken of

of treating that which the greatest writers of the Primitive Church never failed to set forth as the most glorious of all revelations and developments, the student should bear in mind this plain truth—that this vagueness and hesitancy is distinctly incompatible with a loyal acceptance of the express declarations of three of the four Evangelists. One of these holy writers, in the most distinct and concise form of words, declares that the Word became flesh [1]. The other two are permitted to specify, in terms that admit of no possibility of being explained away, how the blessed fact took place. To hesitate on this point is simply impossible unless we are prepared to extend that hesitation to the statements of the holy writers, and to call in question not merely their inspiration but their veracity. If this be done, the whole question of the truthfulness and credibility of the Gospel history must be re-discussed, and the subject on which we are now engaged—Christian doctrine—must be indefinitely postponed. We return then simply to the statement that, if we believe

in current writings and teachings in much less qualified terms. The true teaching as to our dear Lord and Master, never more needed than at present, may all be summed up in four words of Arnobius (*adv. Gentes*, I. 53), "Deus radice ab intimâ."

[1] John i. 14.

in the truth of the Gospel message, we cannot consistently tolerate any vagueness or hesitancy as to the fact of the Incarnation of the Word that "was with God, and was God [1]."

Doctrine of the two Natures.

We pass then onward to the true meaning of all that is involved in the blessed fact, and especially in the simple but comprehensive statement of the so-called Creed of Athanase, "that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is alike God and Man."

Now in the endeavour fully to grasp the meaning of these vital words, and generally to understand all that they imply, it will be well for the student first to try to realize plainly and clearly what he understands by the technical words Substance, Person, and Nature. Of these words he will have already had to consider the first and second in the doctrine of the blessed Trinity. He will be aware that the term Substance or Essence implies that which is common to the Eternal Father, the Eternal Son, and the Eternal Spirit. He will also remember that the confessedly inadequate term Person, for which there are two corresponding Greek words [2],

[1] John i. 1.

[2] See Hagenbach, *History of Christian Doctrines*, § 95, vol. i. p. 375, Transl. (Edinb. 1880).

is used to mark the eternal distinctions in the adorable Three who, as already stated, have one and the same essence and Godhead, and in their eternal oneness are One God. The third term Nature now comes for the first time more distinctly before us, and is used for the most part in its ordinary sense, as indicating all that characterizes and constitutes the subject or object to whom or to which the term may be applied [1].

We can now avail ourselves of these terms, and express the foregoing statement relative to our Lord Jesus Christ under the following more definitely theological form; and we state the right faith as to the Incarnation to be this—that in the one Christ there are two distinct natures, the one the Divine, the other the sinless human, so related to one another by their co-existence in the one Divine personality, that, to use the admirably precise language of Hooker, there is, in the case of these two natures, "a co-operation often, an association always, but never any mutual participation whereby the *properties* of the one are infused into the other [2]."

[1] The definition of the word in Richardson's *Dictionary* s. v. is, "the aggregate of qualities inherent from the birth or creation of anything; forming or constituting its being, essence, or existence."

[2] Hooker, *Eccl. Polity*, v. 53, 3 (ed. Keble).

If this statement can be thoroughly mastered, the student will have before him, in a comparatively brief form of words, the essence of the doctrine of the Incarnation. What he has tenaciously to hold is oneness of person, yet no oneness of nature, whether arising from absorption or fusion, but—to use the language of the Council of Chalcedon—two perfect natures, each preserving its own characteristics, "running up into one person and hypostasis [1]," that one person being the one only-begotten Son, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. He must further have always present in his thoughts not merely that there are two natures in the one ever-blessed Person, but that each of these natures is, in the highest and fullest sense of the word, *perfect*—and possesses every quality, attribute, and characteristic, known and unknown, that is included in the conception of perfectness. This will almost automatically dispose of the varied forms of error that history tells us have clung to the blessed doctrine we are now considering, or that modern thought has ventured to suggest. With the epithet we are speaking of in the foreground of thought, it will not be possible to suppose

[1] The Canons and Definition of Faith of this great Council will be found in Routh's *Opuscula*, vol. ii (Oxon. 1840). The words quoted are on p. 79, lines 9 and 10.

that our Lord had not a true human soul and spirit; or that He had but one, and that one a Divine will, or that we can draw any certain inferences from human ignorance, in our present fallen state, as to what as man He knew not, when, as we have already seen, human nature in its original perfection may have had intellectual gifts and intuitions now utterly lost to us through man's primal disobedience.

The Kenosis and its effects.

What has been said will, I sincerely believe, help and steady; but it would be idle to suppose for a moment that profound questions do not remain which will exercise human thought to the very last—such questions, for example, as the extent to which our Lord "emptied Himself" when He took our nature, or the effect that His taking it might have had on His Divine nature. Into such questions the student will, in my judgment, be wise not, at present at any rate, to enter. These things really belong to a realm into which hardly the most disciplined thought can hope to penetrate. We can now only see darkly; we can know only in part; and it is ever perilous under such limitations to attempt the solutions of questions which, by the circumstances of the case, are insoluble. As to the two questions we have alluded to—the so-called

Kenosis, and any effect that the Lord's taking human nature may have on His Divine nature —it may seem quite enough to say, in regard of the Kenosis, that we must believe that He emptied Himself of all that would have been incompatible with the assumption of a perfect, but true human nature. In regard of the other question, we may just presume to say this—that Holy Scripture supplies us with at least one illustration, viz. that, in regard of suffering, He vouchsafed to learn by experience what, as God, He could not otherwise have experimentally known [1].

Doctrine of the Atonement.

But we must pass onward. We have lingered on the great doctrines immediately connected with the Incarnation on account of their profound importance. We have however now to turn to the great doctrines which flow from it; and first and chief among these stands that vital doctrine to which we instinctively pass when we dwell upon the mystery of Immanuel—the Atonement which Immanuel made for the fallen and sinful race for whose salvation He came down from heaven and died on Golgotha.

In approaching the profound doctrine of the Atonement the student must always have two

[1] Hebrews v. 8.

thoughts very clearly in the foreground: first, that, on this side the grave, we can never arrive at, or set forth in words, the full nature and meaning of the Atonement, or realize the comprehensiveness of its issues; secondly, that there is no Christian doctrine in which there is a greater need of a due and harmonious recognition of all the diversified aspects in which it is presented to us in God's Holy Word. A very great part of the errors and misconceptions that, from age to age have been put forward by really earnest and devout writers, are due simply to the fact of exaggerating or overemphasizing one aspect of the doctrine in comparison with the rest. A ready illustration may be found in the widely prevailing belief in the Early Church that the Atonement involved the idea of a ransom paid to—the Devil[1]. And yet, on the other hand, to regard the idea of ransom as belonging only to the realm of metaphor, is to rob vital texts[2] of their true significance, and to attenuate a most certain and most salutary truth.

[1] See Hagenbach, *History of Christian Doctrines*, § 68, vol. i. p. 257 sq., and § 134, vol. ii. p. 53 sq. (Edinb. 1880).

[2] Consider Matt. xx. 28, Mark x. 45, and comp. 1 Tim. ii. 6, Rom. iii. 25.

With these thoughts well in the foreground, the student will probably be helped in his endeavour to grasp the essential meaning of the Atonement if he bears in mind the following principles: (1) That the great doctrine involves two conceptions which it will be helpful to consider separately,—the one being rescue, and redemption from the power of sin and death; the other, reconciliation with a Father and a God from whom disobedience and all its consequences had separated us. Christ is alike our Redeemer and our Reconciler. This last conception, however, is probably that on which we most dwell in Christian practice. But here one-sidedness must be very carefully avoided. The Atonement does not involve and imply, simply and solely, the reconciliation of mankind to God. It also involves, conversely, as our 2nd Article rightly maintains, the reconciliation of God to mankind. "It was," as Bishop Martensen truly says, "a reconciliation accomplished, not only on earth but in heaven, not only in the hearts of men but in the heart of God [1]." To deny this is to lose sight of the dreadful nature of sin, and to forget that it must prevent the outflow of the love of an all-holy God, and that it is only by the eternal efficacies of the Atone-

[1] *Christian Dogmatics*, § 157, p. 304 (Transl.).

ment that this love can flow forth unimpeded to the children of men [1].

It must further be borne in mind (2) that the essence of the Atonement is a sinless life of perfect obedience, voluntarily surrendered for the love of man to a cruel death; and that the blood, which is the life [2], thus poured out is the λύτρον, the holy element that "cleanseth us from all sin [3]," though the precise manner in which this is effected no mortal tongue can tell. The mystery of the forgiveness of sins through the atoning blood of the Saviour can never be analyzed by human thought, but the truly repentant soul can feel it, and does feel it, as one of those spiritual certitudes which are based upon the very nature of the triune God. If God is love, there must be, though *how* we *a priori* know not, forgiveness of sins.

If we add to this (3) that the principle of *substitution* must be recognized in every true conception of the Atonement,—though not necessarily in the crude form in which the principle is often put forward,—we shall have before us the principal elements of the great doctrine that we are now considering. The idea of substitution is almost necessarily involved in the great truth that Christ is the representative

[1] Comp. *Salutary Doctrine,* p. 79 (S. P. C. K.).
[2] Deut. xii. 23. [3] 1 John i. 7.

of the whole human family [1]. Of the validity of this truth there can be no doubt. He who called the human race into existence, He who made man, vouchsafed Himself to become Man, and thus in the truest and fullest sense of the words can be regarded as the representative of the race, so that what He did, the race can be accounted to have done, as being summed up in Him; and what He suffered, the race can be accounted to have suffered. Yet as He bore actually all in His own blessed body and personality, the vicarious principle so far plainly emerges, that we can truly say with one Apostle, that by His "stripes we were healed [2]," and with another, that He was the personal "propitiation for our sins [3]."

With these three principles steadily borne in mind, the student will not find serious difficulty in obtaining a firm grasp of the vital doctrine of the Atonement.

The Lord's Resurrection.

We naturally pass from this doctrine to that which, as it were, sets its seal upon it, and is the eternal witness to us of God's acceptance of the atoning sacrifice—the Resurrection of Him who died for us on Golgotha.

[1] See especially Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, § 120, vol. iv. p. 95 sq (Transl.).

[2] 1 Pet. ii. 24. [3] 1 John ii. 2.

In a certain sense the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ may be regarded as an historical fact rather than as a doctrinal truth; but a little consideration will show that it is both, and may be considered under each aspect. As an historical fact it has of late received steadily increasing verification. The two long-recognized objections, either that the death was illusive or the resurrection illusive, have been so shaken by recent arguments that it does not seem too much to say that the difficulty of denying the fact of the Lord's resurrection has become increasingly great, if not practically insuperable. We were commonly left with the dilemma that the earliest witnesses were either deceivers or deceived; but the estimate of each side of the dilemma is now considerably modified. That the earliest witnesses were not deceivers is now admitted by nearly all reputable opponents. That they were deceived by illusions, or accepted too credulously the reports of those who had been so deceived, has of late been judged by fair minds to be less and less compatible with the plain matter-of-fact tone of the statements in the Gospels, and, as a counter-argument, to have lost much of the force that it once seemed to have in the controversy. To which it may be added, that

increasing difficulty has been felt in dealing with the demonstrable fact that, in little more than five and twenty years after the event, a belief in the reality of the Lord's resurrection was entertained in large cities widely distant from one another, in all of which we may feel perfectly certain that the witnesses would have been cross-questioned, and their statements subjected to more than ordinary examination.

In regard of the doctrine, the great point to which attention should be directed is the mighty cosmical influence, and the power—to use the language of an Apostle—of the Lord's resurrection. That resurrection is not only a victory over the last enemy, in reference to mankind, but is the presage of the perfecting of the Church and of the world, and the pledge to a whole waiting creation of the deliverance from the bondage of corruption. The whole aspect of the Resurrection is prophetic. As Bishop Martensen has most truly said, "the denial of the miracle of the Resurrection is not the denial of a single historical fact, it is a denial of the entire prophetic aspect of the world which Christianity presents; which finds in the Resurrection its beginning in fact[1]." The whole subject of the significance of the Resur-

[1] *Christian Dogmatics*, § 172, p. 319 (Transl.).

rection has been well treated by several modern writers, and may rightly claim the student's most careful and devout consideration. That a writer of such quick perception as Schleiermacher could find no doctrinal meaning in the Lord's resurrection, though he did not actually deny that the Resurrection took place, only illustrates the obvious fact that the full intellectual appreciation of a great truth requires something more than an acceptance of it from mere inability to deny it.

Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The transition from the Resurrection of the Lord, if we include in it the Ascension, to the doctrine of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, and His relation to Christ and to His Church, is natural and immediate. The return of the Incarnate Lord was, as He Himself tells us, the necessary antecedent of the advent of the Comforter [1]. The Holy Spirit had been in the world prior to His final and historic descent. He had vouchsafed His quickening power to the saints of the Old Covenant. He had guided the thoughts of the writer; He had breathed in the utterance of the psalmist, and had spoken by the prophets, but He had not entered into an abiding union with mankind until, as the

[1] John xvi. 7.

Spirit of Christ [1], and as glorifying Him [2], He vouchsafed to make audibly and visibly manifest His descent upon the gathered company of the disciples, and thenceforth to make known to angels and to men the now miraculously authenticated existence of the Church of the living God. The doctrine of the Holy Ghost in His relations to Christ and to His Church, or, to use another form of expression, of his inhabitation in redeemed mankind, thus becomes the cardinal doctrine to which, at this point in his survey of Christian dogmatics, the student must give his close and undivided attention.

The question of the Procession of the Holy Ghost may here be alluded to, though in theological strictness belonging rather to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and of the immanent distinctions of the divine Essence. It will be seen that the Western addition, though unauthorized as an addition to the Creed, does nevertheless express a profound spiritual truth, and does obviate tendencies to misconceptions which from time to time have appeared in the Eastern mode of setting forth the immanent relation of the distinctions in God [3].

[1] Rom. viii. 9; Gal. iv. 6. [2] John xvi. 14.

[3] See Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, § 29 *b.* 2, vol. i. p. 383 sq.

The student, however, will be wise not to enter far into these profound questions. To use a technical form of expression, the τρόπος ἀποκαλύψεως, or the revealed relations of the three Persons of the blessed Trinity in regard to us men and our salvation, will in most cases be found more practically helpful than meditations on the τρόπος ὑπάρξεως, or the relations of the three adorable Persons to each other—vitally important as that doctrine is for the duly qualified and disciplined mind.

The working of the Spirit.

But to return. In the endeavour to realize the nature of the working of the Holy Spirit in the Church and the world, and in the hearts and spirits of individual believers, it will always be found helpful if it be borne in mind that the Spirit is the life-giving, quickening, perfecting, and glorifying principle in the divine economy; and that His enduring aim and object (if we may presume so to speak), whether in the Church or in the individual, is to give efficacy to all that is best, purest, and holiest, and to bring to perfection all elements of good that may as yet be incomplete and undeveloped. He is thus the Spirit of inspiration and of prophecy; of illumination and of bringing to remembrance. Through Him the apostle reveals mysteries,

and the evangelist recalls in all their vividness his Master's words[1]. Through Him the individual soul is renewed and quickened, and, if His blessed movements are not resisted, at last purified and sanctified. Furthermore, it must ever be borne in mind that all this varied exercise of His plastic and vivific powers is to glorify the eternal Son, to spread the borders of His kingdom, and to imprint His image more vividly and more permanently on the soul of each individual believer. Lastly, it must never be forgotten that all this blessed working is simultaneous with the working of the Son, and that both are especially manifested in their holy unity of operation in the purifying, sanctifying, and final perfecting of the Church.

The working of Christ in his Church.

But, in thus speaking of the simultaneous working of the ascended and glorified Lord and the descended and indwelling Spirit, it is obviously necessary to have some general conception of the nature of the working not only of the Spirit, but of Him who, as Head over all things to the Church[2], is ever vouchsafing to carry on His divine work in the Church and the world until the kingdoms of the world shall

[1] John xiv. 56. [2] Eph. i. 22.

have become the kingdom of Christ, and all shall at length have been fulfilled.

The student will best realize the nature and character of this continuous working of Christ in His Church and in the world, if, with the best modern theologians, he regards it as carried out by our Lord as alike our Prophet, our Priest, and our King.

In His prophetic office He preserves to us in all its vividness the image of Himself; He brings home to us His words; and teaches us with deeper affection to mark, read, and learn the Holy Scriptures, and to behold in them the ripened fruit of the Spirit's inspiration. The whole doctrine relating to the Word of God will rightly form an appendix to this portion of the subject to which we are now calling attention.

In the Lord's priestly office He is to us the sole mediator and intercessor. He helps the soul to embrace and realize His atonement, and by the Sacraments which He ordained He brings us into living contact with Himself; He dwells in us, and enables us to dwell in Him.

Last of all, in His kingly office, He is the world-perfecting power, subduing all things unto Himself, and bringing nearer and nearer that for wh.ch the faithful on earth, the souls

beneath the altar, and the whole travailing creation is waiting and longing—the redemption of the body [1], and the hour when the subjection to vanity will give place to the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Considered under these three aspects the conception of the Lord's continuous working in the Church and in the world will present but little difficulty to the meditative spirit.

The Church.

From these thoughts on the ever-combined working of the eternal Son and the eternal Spirit we are naturally led onward to some thoughts on that which is the great theatre of their working and manifestations —the Holy Catholic Church. But what mean we by these weighty words? What are we to understand by that oft-repeated and oft-misused term—the Church?

The definitions, we well know, are numberless, but none perhaps more true and comprehensive than the short paraphrase in our Prayer Book—"the blessed company of all faithful people," or the longer form which we find in the Articles. The essential idea is that of a community, but of a community specially marked by two characteristics—the one that of being gathered together from all quarters; the other that of being

[1] Rom. viii. 23.

animated by one deep-seated conviction—that Jesus Christ is the very and eternal Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. The juxtaposition in the Apostles' Creed of the Church and the Communion of Saints seems designed to bring out the essential idea of a chosen out and believing community, and inferentially to justify the two great predications of holiness and catholicity. Further, that there is only one such community is made patent in the shorter Creed by the definite article, which is in effect just as expressive as the emphasized "one" in the Nicene Creed. There is, however, one distinct addition in this latter Creed of an importance, especially in these present days, which we can scarcely over-estimate. To the three notes of the Church above alluded to, the Nicene Creed, while omitting the second note, —perhaps as necessarily involved in the idea of a body founded by Christ and dwelt in by the Holy Ghost,—appends the note of apostolicity. That which the Apostolic mother Church taught, the holy Catholic Church teaches now. The doctrine received from the Apostles, embodied in the New Testament, and formulated in the earliest Creeds, is that which unites past and present, and serves to condition all historical development.

The distinction between the visible and invisible Church, though in certain senses of the words a clearly recognizable distinction, is not found in the earlier ages of Christianity. In those days when the Church was tested and purified by every form of persecution, and when the seen and unseen were felt to be included in one blessed community, the distinction never came into prominence. At the time of the Reformation it was otherwise. The student, however, in using the term "invisible" in reference to the Church, will do well to remember that it does not really imply more than this,—that (to use the words of Dean Jackson) "what persons of the militant and visible Church be true denisons of the heavenly Jerusalem, or city of God, is to us invisible or unknown [1]."

The Sacraments.

The doctrine of the Sacraments may be rightly appended to the doctrine of the Church; the Sacraments being acts of the Church, ordained by the Founder of the Church, by which believers are united to Him in a most close and most blessed fellowship. They are distinct *channels* of grace, and may always be distinguished from Prayer, with which they are necessarily connected, by observing that in prayer we may, by the grace of God, enter

[1] *On the Creed*, Book xii. 7. 6, vol. xii. p. 45 (Oxf. 1834).

into communion with our Lord, but that in the Sacraments, and especially the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we have a real union with Him. In that Sacrament there is an actual communication of the very life of our Redeemer, and a strengthening and refreshing of the soul by His blessed body and blood, as certain and as real as the strength and refreshment which the body normally receives from the symbolizing elements. In Holy Baptism we are incorporated in the fellowship of Christ; we are born anew and made the children of grace. It is the Sacrament of Regeneration, and, by the nature of the case, can never be repeated. In the Holy Communion we have the Sacrament of strengthening and renewal, and so of ever-needed repetition. In both Sacraments we may rightly believe in the co-operating presence of the Holy Spirit. In Baptism we pray that the Spirit may be given in order that a new birth may be vouchsafed [1]. In the Holy Communion the prayer of invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the elements, though not retained in our own service, holds a distinct place in all the primitive Liturgies.

[1] The gift of the Holy Spirit is prayed for in our Baptismal Service, not in general terms, but specifically that the child or person "may be born again, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation."

Final Communion.

4. We have now considered the principal doctrines that relate to God's communion with Man during the period that extends from the Incarnation to the Advent. We have noted the increasing closeness and reality of the communion, and have marked its culmination in the Sacraments. Yet we are permitted to look beyond this, and to behold some outline of the final communion when the tabernacle of God shall be with men [1], and His servants shall see His face and bear His name on their foreheads [2], and the militant Church of earth shall have become the mystic Bride, made ready and adorned for her husband [3].

The doctrines relating to this consummation of the Church and the world, and of the final communion of God with His redeemed servants, are few and mysterious, but still so far defined as to warrant our adding them to the *credenda* of the Church.

First and foremost among these is the blessed doctrine of the Lord's return to this earth—real and visible as His departure [4].

[1] Rev. xxi. 3. [2] Rev. xxii. 4. [3] Rev. xxi. 2.

[4] Consider especially Acts i. 11. The language of the two holy Angels is studiedly precise,—"So in like manner." The completeness of the manifestation cannot for a moment be called into question.

Into the detail of this consolatory revelation I do not, in this general survey, purpose to enter; but there are two or three special truths involved in the doctrine to which the student's attention may very profitably be directed. And the first is this; that the consummation of the Church and the world stands in the closest relation with the person of Christ. Every issue of the future is indissolubly connected with Him. They that are in the graves will hear His voice and will come forth [1]. Every eye will see Him [2]. Risen believers will have a body conformed to His body of glory [3]. It is before His judgment-seat that all the nations will be gathered [4]. It is with Him that the saints will reign in the mystic thousand years [5]. It is at His marriage supper that the blessed ones who are bidden will take their place [6]. Christ is all and in all at every point in the sequences of the last things. This sets, as it were, its seal on all revelations relating to Christian Eschatology, and ministers an assurance which is often greatly needed by the soul when it enters into the contemplation of the

The Lord's Second coming.

[1] John v. 28.
[2] Rev. i. 7.
[3] Phil. iii. 21.
[4] Matt. xxv. 32.
[5] Rev. xx. 4, 6.
[6] Rev. xix. 9.

closing scenes of this world's history, and the dawning glories of the world to come.

Another momentous truth is involved in the repeated intimations expressed in Holy Scripture, both directly and indirectly, that the Lord will come quickly, and that the end will be, not as human history might lead us to think, by immanent development and continuities of prevenient changes, but abrupt, sudden, and unlooked for. Signs there will be alike in the Church and the world—failing faith [1], distress of nations [2], and, as Scripture seems to indicate, tokens in earth and heaven [3]. The elect will note them, but the world will not heed them, and the closing scene of human history will come, as the Lord Himself has declared, as a snare "on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth [4]." As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the day of the Son of Man [5].

The third truth which may be alluded to in connexion with the Lord's Advent is less clearly defined, but still appears to rest on declarations in Holy Scripture which cannot be set aside as having no clear spiritual significance. I allude to the binding of Satan [6], and the thousand-years

[1] Luke xviii. 8.
[2] Luke xxi. 25.
[3] Matt. xxiv. 29; Luke xxi. 11.
[4] Luke xxi. 35.
[5] Matt. xxiv. 37.
[6] Rev. xx. 2.

reign of the sons of the First Resurrection [1]. The truth which the best modern divines consider to be conveyed by this revelation is to the following effect—that prior to the Lord's Advent there will be a flowering-time in the Church [2]—a time of the manifestation of a deeper love of the Lord, and, it may be, of greater enthusiasm in missionary efforts, and in the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Resurrection of the body.

The doctrine of the Resurrection of the body stands in closest connexion with the Advent, and, especially in these days, claims of us the most heart-whole acceptance [3].

In the consideration of this momentous doctrine the student must avoid all entanglement in modern speculations, and in fruitless efforts to explain *how* the mighty transition from the corruptible to the incorruptible will actually

[1] Rev. xx. 4.

[2] Compare Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, § 252, p. 473 (Transl.); Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, § 152, vol. iv. p. 398. The same view seems now taken by the best writers on these profound subjects. How far the saints of God may be permitted to aid their brethren on earth during this blessed flowering-time we know not. Dorner (p. 389, note) throws out a hint as to the possibly gradational character of the First Resurrection, which may have some bearing on the supposition of some form of co-operation.

[3] Rev. xx. 12.

take place. These things lie utterly beyond us. A sober belief resting upon God's Holy Word may be summed up in the following statements:—that Holy Scripture warrants a belief in an intermediate state, in which the soul, separated from the material and the perishable, lives a self-conscious life awaiting the Advent; that it further warrants the belief that at the Advent the soul will be re-clothed, not with a corruptible, but with an incorruptible body, which will be the perfect expression of the personality, and that in that body, thus expressive in each case of our truest self, we shall appear before our Judge. Here it will be wise to stop. Perplexing questions about what constitutes true personality, or whether personal identity is not affected by such mighty changes, may rightly be set aside [1]. Such questions we cannot distinctly answer on this side the grave. That all men will rise again, and with their bodies, is the plain statement of the Creed; but as to the nature and characteristics of these

[1] Bishop Goodwin (*Foundations of the Creed*, p. 332) has touched upon this subject, but, with the sobriety which marks all his writings, remarks at the close of his comments, that "as concerns this same philosophically difficult question, we may be content with a plain man's view, and we may say that we accept as concerns the future life that which is found sufficient for the wants of the present," p. 357.

bodies we neither know, nor can know, more than this, that, in each case, it will be the man's own body, and that, an incorruptible body,—a body of glory in the case of those on the right hand, a body of shame in the case of those on the left hand [1].

The Life everlasting.

The last doctrine is that with which our Creeds come to their close in the mysterious words "the life everlasting," or, as in the Nicene Creed, "the life of the world to come,"—the life in heaven, the essence of which is knowing God and being known of Him [2], ever more and more intensively as the ages of the ages melt away in eternity,—the life which the Apostle speaks of as "the life which is life indeed [3]." Of that life we can form no adequate conception. It is not enough to think of it as an endless, or, in the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as an "indissoluble" life [4]. It is far, far more; it is, to use the words of the Creed in their Latin form, "vita aeterna," life qualitatively perfect, and, it may be, ever attaining higher and higher degrees of perfection. Holy progress, a nearer and ever fuller admission and access to the

[1] Compare Daniel xii. 2, 3.
[2] John xvii. 3; comp. ch. x. 14.
[3] 1 Tim. vi. 19.
[4] Heb. vii. 16.

Beatific Vision of God, and a consequently more and more glorifying transformation [1], will perhaps be the more clearly defined characteristics of the life on which we are now meditating. Such a life is only imaginable under the conception of more and more realized union and communion with God and with Christ in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. We may thus think of it as the realization of that communion which we have been tracing in these two addresses, and which the various forms of Christian doctrine all tend to set forth and to glorify [2].

And if this be so, if our most realizable conception of eternal life be communion with God, then what can separation from Him, the being without Him, actually be, save the opposite of eternal life, or, in the shortest form of words, eternal death? The expression does not occur in Scripture, but we find it in our formularies, and we cannot obliterate the conception it presents to us. It may be quite true that in the Apostles' Creed and in the Nicene Creed the conception can only be fairly regarded as latent. But it cannot for a moment be denied that it

[1] Compare 2 Cor. iii. 18.

[2] As, for example, in the sentences of the Burial Service; compare also the concluding collect.

may be drawn from the words by just inference, and that the words of the Athanasian Creed, which, as we well know, are in substance the words of the Lord, must ever vindicate their position as a part of the Catholic Faith.

Conclusion.

We have now concluded our lengthened survey of Christian doctrine. Two objects have throughout been steadily borne in view; in the first place to set forth the coherence of our *credenda*, and the kind of natural order that may be traced in their development. In the second place my object has been to present in each case the salient features of the doctrine, and to specify in the more difficult cases the leading principles under which the investigation of the doctrine may most hopefully be carried out. The work has been confesedly difficult. The discussion of doctrine is never in itself an easy task, but when the discussion has to be conducted in a condensed form, and results stated without specification of the processes by which they were arrived at, difficulties become greatly enhanced.

What however has been attempted has now been finished, and it remains only for me humbly to pray to God that this endeavour to

encourage especially my younger brethren to devote themselves more heartily and persistently to sacred study generally, and more particularly under the two forms, Holy Scripture and Christian Doctrine, in which it has been presented to them in this Charge, may receive the divine blessing.

To each one, then, of you, my dear brethren, to whom is entrusted the stewardship of the mysteries of God, I do solemnly and earnestly say, in the words of an Apostle, "Be diligent in these things, give thyself wholly to them[1]"; and that too not only that your own progress may become more real and manifest, but that you may encourage and help others, and especially Christian parents, to do their duty to their children, and to strive with increasing faithfulness to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 15.

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